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Building trust: the challenge of building partnership capacity in U.S.-Mexico military relations

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THESIS

BUILDING TRUST: THE CHALLENGE OF BUILDING PARTNERSHIP CAPACITY IN U.S.-MEXICO MILITARY RELATIONS

by

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This thesis focuses on the following questions. Why does a relatively low level of trust characterize U.S.-Mexican defense relations? Has the long-shared history of the two policies helped or hindered the building of trust? What are the main obstacles to the strengthening a military-to-military partnership based on trust? In particular, what should the U.S. military do to ensure better cooperation between both militaries to meet the security challenges confronting North America and beyond in the twenty-first century?

This thesis will determine why prior U.S.-military engagements with the Mexican military have been ineffective in shaping a relationship based on trust. This research study highlights the historical and cultural paradigms that have challenged the relationship between the U.S. and Mexican militaries. The focus of this research is not to blame the professionalism and effectiveness of the Mexican military to combat these security challenges, but to study a policy environment, and provide policy recommendations of trust-building mechanisms to be incorporated (from the U.S. side) to help build a solid relationship built on trust, not capabilities. Finally, this study addresses key factors that have prevented a trust-building program, and will outline a range of policy options that the U.S. military forces can use to build a much-needed trust between these two institutions.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BPC	building partnership capacity
CHDS	Center for Homeland Defense and Security
COCOM	combatant command
CWD	Case Writing Division
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
DSCA	Defense Security Cooperation Agency
ESG	Escuela Superior de Guerra
FMF	foreign military financing
HCM	Heroico Colegio Militar
IA	implementing agency
IAAFA	Inter-American Air Forces Academy
IADC	Inter-American Defense College
LATAM	Latin-American
LOA	letter of offer and acceptance
MTT	mobile training team
PDE	professional development education
PME	professional military education
SAMM	Security Assistance Management Manual
SCO	Security Cooperation Office
SEDENA	Secretaria de Defensa Nacional
SEMAR	Secretaria de la Marina
TM	training managers
USG	United States Government
USNORTHCOM	United States Northern Command
USSOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
WHINSEC	Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation

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I am extremely thankful for the opportunity given to explore a particular topic dear to my heart. Throughout my time at the Inter-American Air Forces Academy (IAAFA), I learned the importance of building partnership as the cornerstone of accomplishing U.S. strategic objectives. IAAFA was indeed my greatest influence in the evolution of this paper, as I pledge to continue to contribute towards our unwavering commitment to enhance U.S.-Mexico security cooperation efforts and heighten defense relations.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

Military relations between the United States and Mexico have historically been a rollercoaster of geopolitical dilemmas that have led Mexicans to develop a sense of skepticism in U.S.-foreign policies. Since 9/11, after seeing the increase of different security challenges on both sides, the idea of a strong relationship between both armed forces seemed necessary; however, relations between these two institutions have been far from close. In 2002, the United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) was established to provide command and control of the Department of Defense (DOD) homeland defense efforts and theater security cooperation with Canada, Mexico, and the Bahamas.[1] Despite efforts to increase security cooperation assistance through political programs—such as the Merida Initiative—the United States stills fails to establish a solid trust with its neighbor's military. So, is the Mexican military prepared to confront ongoing and future security challenges? How much assistance is the U.S. providing to the Mexican military? More importantly, is the U.S. military taking the right steps through its security cooperation initiatives to meet the security challenges, and to reinforce effective trust-building mechanisms in military-to-military engagements with Mexico?

This thesis focuses on the following questions. Why does a relatively low level of trust characterize U.S.-Mexican defense relations? Has the long-shared history of the two policies helped or hindered the building of trust? What are the main obstacles to the strengthening of a military-to-military partnership based on trust? In particular, what should the U.S. military do to ensure better cooperation between both militaries to meet the security challenges confronting North America and beyond in the twenty-first century?

1 USNORTHCOM, "About USNORTHCOM," USNORTHCOM, http://www.northcom.mil/AboutUSNORTHCOM.aspx.

This thesis will determine why prior U.S.-military engagements with the Mexican military have been ineffective in shaping a relationship based on trust. This research study highlights the historical and cultural paradigms that have challenged the relationship between the U.S. and Mexican militaries. The focus of this research is not to blame the professionalism and effectiveness of the Mexican military to combat these security challenges, but to study a policy environment and provide policy recommendations of trust-building mechanisms to be incorporated (from the U.S. side) to help build a solid relationship build on trust, not capabilities. Finally, this study addresses key factors that have prevented a trust-building program, and will outline a range of policy options that the U.S.-military forces can use to build a much-needed trust between these two institutions.

B. IMPORTANCE

The relationship between Mexico and the United States is unique to others in the region. The economic interdependence and the increasing cultural ties bring these two countries together; however, military relations have not been the most solid. *Trust* has been a critical issue that determines the success of this relationship. Historical and constitutional factors have prevented the relationship between these two militaries to flourish. A misrepresentation or misunderstanding of the Mexican military, and the established priorities and strategy by the unified command, have potentially hindered the efforts to truly build a partnership centered in trust. A disconnect between U.S. counter-narcotic aid and institution-building programs, has become troublesome when establishing continuity of relations between these institutions.[2] After exploring this disconnection, it is important to identify the need to analyze potential policy options that can assist in building trustworthiness within an institution.

A research study that analyzes the internal and external policies within these two military institutions, and seeks to further understand the cultural barriers that challenge policy-making, is crucial when examining the association. The U.S. armed forces should

2 Agnes Gereben Schaefer, Benjamin Bahney and K. Jack Riley, *Security in Mexico: Implications for US Policy Options* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009).

fully understand the internal institutional challenges the Mexican armed forces face before determining strategies to build an effective trusting partnership. It is critical to identify the root of faulty strategies that have been ineffective in establishing the U.S. military's trustworthiness. The Mexican view of the U.S. hegemony, in particularly in the Western hemisphere, has made this relationship more difficult. There are many reasons to increase the degree of military-to-military cooperation between two countries, given the positive interdependence in other aspects of the relation. Yet, it seems that the relationship is far apart when compared to other countries in the Western Hemisphere. Despite all the U.S.-military assistance in the war against drugs, it is difficult to measure the success of these initiatives, if the relationship between these two institutions remains incompatible.

Similar to those used for the Canadian Armed Forces, there are other alternatives to DOD practices that could produce a synergic relationship between the United States and Mexico. These include an array of institutional practices that focus on education, and develop the professionalism and partnership of both countries' future military leaders. In addition to providing military equipment and technical experience to confront current security challenges, the DOD could establish and increase professional development programs that focus on building cross-cultural relations. USNORTHCOM, as well as other combatant commands, could incorporate a trust-building metric that would track the foundation and development of this relationship. The need to continually assess these programs is crucial. The United States should not only demonstrate its building partnership capabilities, but should also focus on its commitment, honesty, and reliability to its allied armed forces. As we study these relationships in detail, a number of obstacles and challenges become apparent.

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

Many negative factors become apparent when discussing U.S.-Mexico defense relations. Studies have shown domestic politics as the direct source that impedes these two institutions from developing a trustworthy relationship. The domestic "political realities" affecting U.S. and Mexican military assistance become more apparent, because

internal politics limit the cooperation intentions.[3] On the other hand, there are initiatives that these two institutions must maintain to keep an open door to future cooperation and trust. Cultural differences between both countries are enormous, limiting the chance of having a productive relationship, particularly given its past. As Alan Riding observed,

> Probably nowhere in the world do two countries as different as Mexico and the United States live side-by-side. Probably nowhere in the world do two neighbors understand each other so little. More than by levels of development, the two countries are separated by language, religion, race, philosophy, and history.[4]

These differences are often forgotten when establishing policies affecting bilateral relations; however, according to Raúl Benítez Manaut, "[W]hen there are huge differences, the friction, the conflicts, and the wrong perceptions become more difficult to overcome and manage."[5] Are U.S. military policies encouraging this separation, or instead closing the gap between these differences?

The U.S. continues to struggle in defining a relationship that should focus more on building trust, rather than enhancing Mexico's capabilities. Trust building does not happen organically, because it goes against a natural bias. Instead of devoting its time in rebuilding its trustworthiness, the DOD strategy focuses on building its capacity by providing the necessary equipment and technical training to fight a war that has led to many consequences resulting from the militarization in Mexico. Arturo Sotomayor highlights that "[M]ilitarization yielded four suboptimal and unintended consequences,"[6] which include repressive policing, negative effects on accountability and human rights, and spillover effects on the Central American region.[7] Militarization in Mexico has been a response to an internal security threat that continues to pressure its civilian leaders. The

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[3] Craig A. Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface," *Strategic Forum*, no. 243 (July 2009).

4 Ibid.

5 Raúl Benítez Manaut, "Mexico-Estados Unidos: Paradigmas De una Inevitable Y Conflictiva Relación," *Nueva Sociedad*, no. 206 (2006), 140.

6 Arturo C. Sotomayor, "Militarization in Mexico and its Implications," in *The State and Security in Mexico: Transformation and Crisis in Regional Perspective*, ed. Brian Bow and Arturo Santa-Cruz (New York: Routledge, 2013), 49.

[7] Ibid.

pressure of creating such policies derives from the internal societal demands and the international players who seek an answer to this security threat.[8] As Mexico continues to fight against transnational criminal organizations (TCO), it must develop a highly effective law-enforcement institution that can take over this role. Jose Francisco Gallardo points out,

> If the state is able to obtain a structural demilitarization, the armed forces will be the first to benefit, and gradually abandon, their commitments to the Plan DN-II [National Defense Plan], paving the way for the eventual professionalization of the Armed Forces.[9]

The U.S. must continue to provide the necessary assistance, not only to overcome this threat, but also to facilitate the transition of this role to a law-enforcement establishment.

The problem lies in the lack of professionalization required to combat TCOs. The United States continues to focus on building partnership capacity, without molding the core of an institution that continues to develop a cadre of military professionals who still resent the past. The Merida Initiative was a tool used by the U.S. government to:

> (1) break the power and impunity of criminal organizations; (2) strengthen border, air, and maritime controls; (3) improve the capacity of justice systems in the region; and (4) curtail gang activity and diminish local drug demand.[10]

In spite of the intent to open relations with the Mexican government, the Merida initiative was quite limited in establishing a trustworthy relationship with the Mexicans. It was certainly not a "Plan Colombia," but many were led to believe that the Merida Initiative would spark a new beginning of U.S.-Mexican defense relations.

Another roadblock that hinders relations is the domestic politics on both sides. Historically, both militaries have been extremely subordinate to civilian leadership. Brian Bow highlights that the post-revolutionary regime in Mexico controlled so much of the foreign policy bureaucracy that it did not permit military officers to directly interact with

8 Ibid.

9 Jose Francisco Gallardo, *Always Near, Always Far: The Armed Forces in Mexico* (Mexico D.F.: Global Exchange and Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas de Acción Comunitaria, 2000).

10 Jordi Diez and Ian Nicholls, *The Mexican Armed Forces in Transition* (Mexico: Strategic Studies Institute, 2006), 6.

U.S. officers.[11] Political considerations are taken into account before making any policies that might not favor the populace. This was evident during President Miguel Aleman's administration, where he rejected a bilateral-military assistance pact that the Mexican Armed Forces were anticipating to appease the populist wing of the party and strengthen the next presidential candidate.[12]

When the United States government publicly defies any of the Mexican institutions, it throws a huge wrench in the information-sharing process between these two governments. Mexican officials will cease to provide crucial information in counterdrugs operations. These types of incidents continue to erode relations between the DOD and the two Mexican armed forces secretariats, *Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional* (SEDENA), and *Secretaria de Marina* (SEMAR). Nonetheless, a strong relationship and understanding of the intrinsic role and mission of each other is crucial to the maintenance of the relationship, regardless of political influences.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

Analysis of U.S.-Mexico defense relations centers around three different categories: the historical background and current status of defense relations, the legit understanding of cultural differences between these two institutions, and the policy options the U.S. must incorporate to build a trustworthy relation. Many articles on these three topics will tend to validate each other; however, there are several disagreements on the approach and the status of current relations and policy options. The literature touches on differences in each culture, but it seldom emphasizes the effect of this crucial cultural misunderstandings. Further analyses conducted by different U.S. governmental agencies prove that the focus of a new strategy for bilateral cooperation relies on high technical equipment and training, but not on institutional building.[13]

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11 Brian Bow, "Beyond Merida?:The Evolution of the U.S. Response to Mexico's Security Crisis," in *The State and Security in Mexico: Transformation and Crisis in Regional Perspective*, ed. Brian Bow and Arturo Santa-Cruz (New York: Routledge, 2013).

12 Roderic Ai Camp, *Generals in the Palacio: The Military in Modern Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

13 Schaefer, Bahney, and Riley, *Security in Mexico: Implications for U.S. Policy Options.*

From an historical analysis, it is quite evident that the Mexican Armed Forces have been subordinate to civilian leadership. Roderic A. Camp suggests that there are original conditions, apart from other Third World cultures, that caused the Mexican military's subordination to civil authorities. These conditions included the extreme emphasis in subordination at formation and professional development courses, military autonomy in its own internal affairs, and the use of a military-political officer in the past to intercede for the military.[14] In a thorough research study conducted by the Global Exchange and the Centro de Investigaciones Económicas y Políticas de Acción Comunitaria (Ciepac), the author, Jose F. Gallardo, explains that this relationship was molded by a non-written civil-military pact that has been enforced since the 1940s, when the presidency, for the first time since the Mexican revolution, was passed down to civilian authority. Gallardo explains that this pact was based on two unwritten rules. The first one was that the President would grant absolute respect to the military, and the second rule would give that same respect to civilian rule.[15] Although these tactics are used by both studies, it remains certain that there is a strong link between these two institutions. The military has been remained loyal to the civilian rule. Frederich Katz, one of the prominent writers about the Mexican revolution and its military, discusses how the Mexican Army has a "clearly observable antimilitarist tradition."[16] Other studies agree that since the birth of the country, "the Mexican Army was instrumental in building the state apparatus, and providing social cohesion to the new political entity, all while centralizing the power in Mexico City."[17] Nonetheless, the Mexican military has been in the past decade in an unfamiliar territory, where its political intentions, its loyalty to civilian rule, and its current role in the war against organized crime is in question. It is critical to analyze the development of this relationship in order to understand how all this led to its current relations with the U.S. Armed Forces.

14 Camp, *Generals in the Palacio: The Military in Modern Mexico*, 6.

15 Gallardo, *Always Near, Always Far: The Armed Forces in Mexico*, xv.

16 Ibid.

17 Diez and Nicholls, *The Mexican Armed Forces in Transition*.

The redirection of the Mexican military role in internal security has certainly bonded these two institutions, but it has also created several unintended internal and external unintended consequences. Arturo C. Sotomayor argues that the militarization policy in Mexico has led to unintended bad consequences. From a repressive, or "*mano dura"* approach towards crime fighting, an increase in human-rights abuses, the erosion of the civilian oversight, to the spillover effects on the Central American region, these implications are a constant reminder of a failed policy that was influenced by societal demand and external pressures.[18] On the other hand, Inigo Guevara Moyano analyzes this change in policy from a positive point of view; he argues that the counter-drug role has influenced the modernization of the armed forces.[19] A common ground by these two authors, and data from the Guevara, indicates that the human rights abuse incidents have increased since the militarization. A congressional research conducted by Ribando Seelke and Flinkea, highlights that, like Sotomayor's argument of the spillover effects in the Central American region, the effect of this militarization also has potential "spillover" violence in the United States.[20] Again, the militarization in Mexico is a complicated condition that has brought the relationship between these two militaries to a new turning point never seen before.

Very little has been written on the current defense relations between these two countries; however, most of the studies indicate that the main issue that prevents this relationship to flourish relies on the lack of trust that exists on both sides. Benitez Manaut recognizes that "distrust" has been the constant element between the U.S.-Mexico since 1830, when Mexico suspected that the U.S. was assisting in the independence of Texas. Other research studies continue to focus this same element as a fundamental reason for the current relations between these two parties. In 2009, Craig A Deare pronounced the U.S.-Mexico defense relations as an *incompatible interface.* Deare "refers to the fact that the armed forces that operate to the north and the south of the shared borders are quite

[18] Sotomayor, *Militarization in Mexico and its Implications*, 49.

[19] Inigo Guevara Moyano, *Adapting, Transforming, and Modernzing under Fire: The Mexican Military 2006–11,* Strategic Studies Institute, 2011, Letort Papers, Strategic Studies Institute, 2011.

[20] Clare Ribando Seelke and Kristin M. Finklea, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Merida Initiative and Beyond* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2013).

distinct, and the 'connections' between them are incongruent."[21] Deare also argues that the obstacles to cooperation on both sides impede these institutions to collaboratively and effectively conduct anti-drug trafficking operations.[22] Some of the U.S. obstacles he highlights are the lack of attention to Mexico that leads to an unorganized structure of priorities: (1) allocation of a security cooperation mission to a command whose mission is solely focus to anticipate and conduct homeland defense and civil support operations (USNORTHCOM); (2) the priorities on combat operations external to the continental territory of the country; (3) the political realities in the United States; and (4) the lack of trust that exists between these two sides.[23]

In a completely different argument, Renuart and Baker refute Deare's assessment by describing Deare's conclusion as an, "outdated U.S.-Mexico paradigm that preceded the 9/11 attacks and recent counter-drug operations in Mexico."[24] Renuart and Baker discredit most of Deare's assertions and conclusions regarding the obstacles that both sides encounter; except for the fact that the political realities limit the U.S.-Mexico defense relations. As Sotomayor also contends, "the civil-military balance of power has serious policy implications for U.S.-Mexican relations."[25] Dr. Richard D. Downie highlights another optimistic approach on the relations between these two institutions. Dr. Downie asserts that President Calderon's decision in 2006 to militarize the efforts to combat the TCOs and to collaborate with the U.S. in that effort resulted in the best defense relations these countries have endured in decades. [26] However, Mexicans elaborate that this is a strategy for subordination of Mexico to the U.S. corporate and national security interests and that the U.S. are insisting that the primary functions of the Mexican military "should be altered from their roles as guarantors of national and

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[21] Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface," 1–2.

[22] Ibid., 5.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Victor E. Renuart and Biff Baker, "U.S.-Mexico Homeland Defense: A Compatible Interface," *Strategic Forum*, no. 254 (2010).

[25] Arturo C. Sotomayor, "Mexico's Armed Forces," *Hemisphere* 16 (2006).

[26] Richard D. Downie, *Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico: The Future of U.S./Mexican Defense Relations* (National Defense University: Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, 2011).

territorial sovereignty to a repressive force to contend with possible internal enemies: drug trafficking, counterinsurgency, police work, and domestic control."[27] Once again, trust becomes the overwhelming factor that persists to damage the true intentions of each side. This inconsistency of perceptions can summarize the differences and the misunderstanding of each other intentions, but most importantly, each other's culture.

The cultural differences are little explored or recorded; however, it becomes an important factor to understand how to establish effective policies and strategies, which can bring mutual benefits and results. A complete misunderstanding continues to bring challenges in this relation. Deare illustrates,

> They both conceive of, send, and receive 'signal' in distinct fashions, with neither of the two being 'correct' in and of themselves. Despite being neighbors, their origins, circumstances, and shared history have caused them to evolve in different fashions, resulting in quite dissimilar organizational cultures, responsibilities, mission, orientations, and capabilities.[28]

This statement presents the idea that there must be a mutual understanding of each other's culture, history, and necessities in order to bridge the gap. After conducting further research, it is evident that often we tend to *shoot ourselves in the foot* due to ignorance. The research study will focus on key cultural distinctions we must recognize to succeed in building partnership trust, and create effective bilateral defense policy options.

Throughout this research, numerous policy recommendations regarding the U.S. efforts to fight this common threat have been recorded. Since 9/11, the U.S. and Mexico were forced to work closer together to handle numerous security threats and border issues. Analysis from a defense cooperation standpoint, and the plethora of organizations involved in the efforts to assist Mexico with this common threat, tend to opaque the reality that a much bigger effort and sacrifice must be employed by the U.S. government, to show our trustworthiness to our neighbors. Most of the policy options presented focus on what we can give the Mexican to help them out; however, Schaefer, Bahney, and

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[27] Gallardo, *Always Near, Always Far: The Armed Forces in Mexico.*

[28] Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface," 2.

Riley present one of the most sound policy alternatives or recommendations in this study. They highlight the fact that most of the security assistance to Mexico has been focused on the transfer of technology and equipment to satisfy their immediate needs; however, the focus should be more on building institutions that can be trusted.[29] Dr. Downie presents the option for the continuation in the support of the Calderon's administration strategy;[30] however, with a new party taking control of the foreign affairs, this might be changing rapidly. It is time to look at defense relation strategies that will help the U.S. military bridge the gap of past perceptions and true cooperation and trust. Trust issues will continue to erode the relationship if they are not handled properly.

E. METHODS AND SOURCES

This study is organized to understand the historical effects of the policies in place by U.S. and Mexican governments and militaries. A cross-cultural analysis will help identify areas where both institutions have failed to recognize ways to overcome the challenges of establishing and reinforcing a solid defense relationship. Nevertheless, the thesis primarily focuses on what the United States has done, and whether such actions are the right steps to enhance bilateral relations. The following research will include an analysis and an historical study of the relations of both militaries. A comprehensive assessment of the different security cooperation programs in Latin America will present evidence of the underpinning issues that security cooperation strategies must be used in Mexico. Moreover, the research study will highlight an intense review of Spanish and English literature that will demonstrate the key determinants and challenges that continue to affect these military-to-military engagements.

A literature review on the Mexican Armed Forces and an historical study of past events is imperative to understand the areas that truly need to improve in order to gain Mexico's trust. Mexican publications, theses, institutional data from government agencies (such as the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)), are used to analyze the current strategy and potential policy options. Other

[29] Schaefer, Bahney, and Riley, *Security in Mexico: Implications for U.S. Policy Options*, 58.

[30] Downie, *Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico*, 18.

research on current U.S.-Mexico initiatives are used to affirm the lessons learned from past mistakes and successes that should force us to reevaluate our commitment strategies with Mexico. Finally, the exploration of a trust-building model is necessary to underline policy options that will enable the military relations to its highest level.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis is organized in four chapters. Chapter I introduces the thesis research. Chapter II provides a background on the Mexican military, and points out the differences in culture and structure between its Northern counterparts. Chapter II will also analyze the structural differences and the cultural roadblocks that hinder their relationship. This study also presents an analysis and the effects of an extreme vertical culture that has historically limited its ability to effectively professionalize the third-largest military in Latin America. Chapter II will finally focus on the professional development of its officer corps and provide a historical breakdown that will help us understand the potential future of the Mexican military in domestic and international affairs.

Chapter III will present an historical background of the U.S.-Mexico relations. This chapter focuses on the historical background to the Mexican wariness of allowing foreign troops onto Mexican soil, even in an advisory or training capacity. The constitutional policies in Mexico, and the constant border issues, challenge a relationship of continuous suspicion or concern often directed at the United States in particular. Besides dissecting the U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) strategies and policies toward security cooperation in Mexico, this chapter presents a statistical analysis of the security cooperation efforts, through international military education and training (IMET) data, as to where the proper strategies developed by USNORTHCOM were effective in establishing a trusting relationship with the Mexican armed forces. Finally, Chapter IV examines the contemporary perils and possibilities central to transforming the U.S.-Mexico Defense Relationship into a connection with greater depth and trust and provides an overall conclusion to this theses research.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE MEXICAN ARMED FORCES

To appreciate uniqueness of the Mexican Armed Forces, Latin American regional experts should understand the history, structure, culture, transformation, and modernization of this institution, compared with the rest of the Western Hemisphere. Unlike other militaries in the region, the Mexican military has not been as thoroughly examined or researched because of its far more limited engagements in politics, compared to its neighbors to the South. A detailed understanding of the Mexican Armed Forces, along with a structural and cultural comparison to the U.S. Armed Forces, is critical to assess the type of cooperation initiatives employed by the U.S. Armed Forces, when building trust between these two institutions. This chapter will present the historical background regarding the rise of the Mexican military, examine the main professional cultural differences, and highlight the challenges it faces and the importance in acknowledging these in the efforts to better understand this institution. It will be made clear that organizational and cultural differences between these two institutions are key factors to consider when developing defense policies and strategies in security cooperation.

A. THE EVOLUTION OF THE ARMED FORCES

1. Historical Background of Mexican Military

Since the early stage of its creation, the Mexican military developed a sense of autonomy in its own affairs. Nevertheless, a study of its Mexican historical evolution reveals a "perverse cycle" of Militarization–Revolution–Demilitarization–Democratization–Remilitarization.[31] This section will illustrate and analyze the evolution of the Mexican armed forces through these distinct phases in Mexican history. Throughout the nineteenth century, the political instability in Mexico, and the stability of a government after the revolution, have been the main causes for altering the civil-military relations and the role of the military as a functioning body.

[31] Gallardo, *Always Near, Always Far: The Armed Forces in Mexico*, xvi.

After winning its independence in 1821, Mexico had the highest militarization in the world. Throughout this period, the need to invest in an army that could defend the sovereignty of a new nation from imperial powers was the main catalyst for the militarization in Mexico. After analyzing historical data, there was one soldier for every 500 Mexican citizens. Later, during the French invasion, there was one soldier for every 117 citizens. During the "Porfiarato" (the era of Porfirio Diaz dictatorship), the ratio moved to 1/376, and by the early 1900s, there was an average of one military soldier per 530 citizens. Figure 1 identifies the militarization of the Mexican Armed Forces. Military personnel also filled many of the important government positions. According to Gallardo, "the Armed Forces served as a privileged trampoline for its soldiers, who later went on to hold important public offices, such as Interior Minister, governor, deputy, senator, ambassador, or manager of a state enterprise."[32] It was evident that the government had a stronghold on military affairs and vice versa. Military influence in civil affairs became a commonality throughout this militarization period.[33]

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

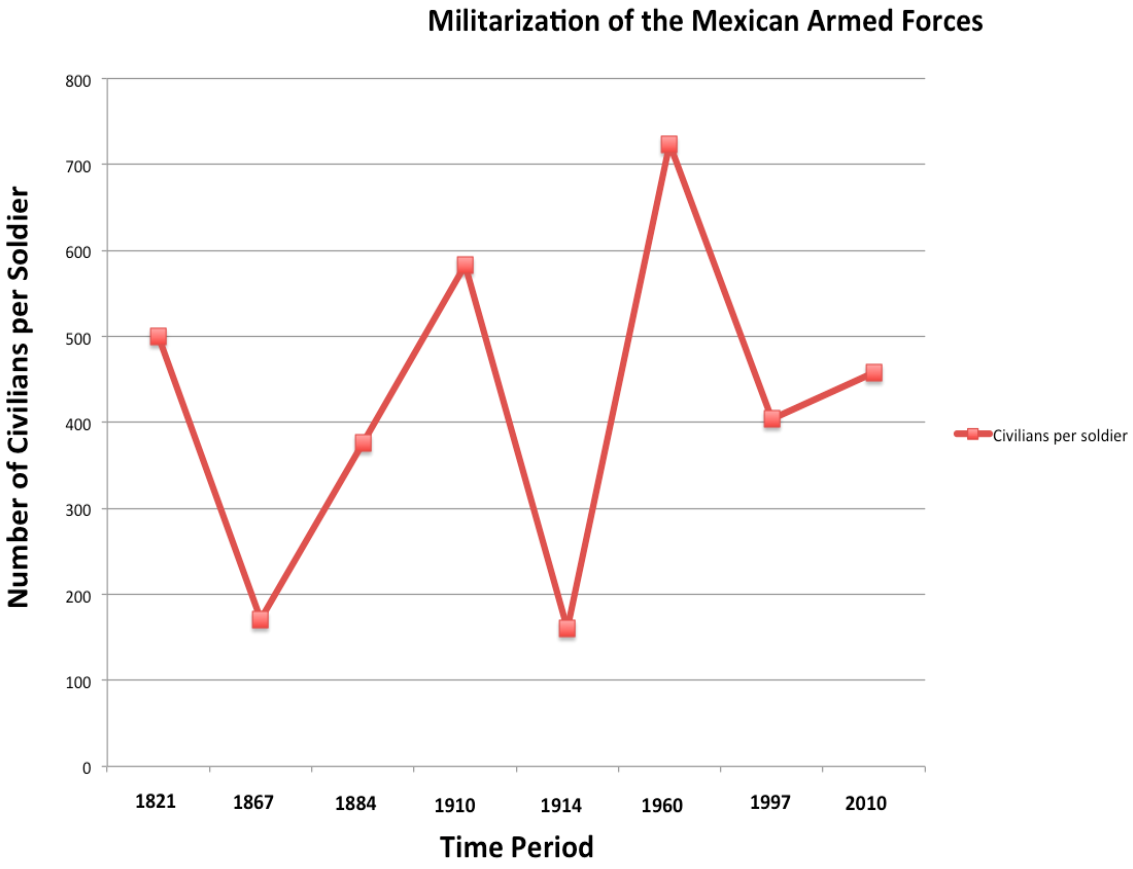

Figure 1. Militarization in Mexico (Number of Civilians per Soldier)[34]

The Mexican Revolution brought a staggering increase of military soldiers. By the end of the revolution, there was one military for every 160 citizens. The Revolutionary armies, led by Francisco (Pancho) Villa and Emiliano Zapata, eventually shrunk and became subordinate to the regular armed forces led by Venustiano Carranza. During this period, the military absorbed more than 50 percent of government expenses. According to the historian Edwin Lieuwen, after the Revolution, the Mexican military budget made this country one of the most militarized countries in the world. The Mexican Revolution and its post-revolutionary regime were the two main factors shaping the Mexican military.[35] The Constitution of 1917 delineated the roles and restrictions of the military

[34] Ibid.; "A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and the Caribbean: Mexico, "Red de Seguridad y Defensa de America Latina, http://www.resdal.org/atlas/atlas10-ing-21-mexico.pdf.

[35] Gallardo, *Always Near, Always Far: The Armed Forces in Mexico*, 3.

continue to stand to this date. Hence, the military institution became completely subject to its civilian authorities.[36]

A true Mexican military subordination to its civilian counterparts initiated in the 1930s. Demilitarization efforts and the orientation towards the supremacy of civilian authorities was the exception to the rest of the countries in the Western Hemisphere. The founding of the National Revolutionary Party (PNR), which evolved later into the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) by Plutarco Elias Calles, set "the groundwork of the beginnings of the transition from a revolutionary to an institutional army, and from a military directly involved in politics to one functioning as a separate state actor."[37] The changes that shifted the power to the presidents came during President Lázaro Cardenas. Cardenas made radical changes that shook the military institutions. Professionalization of the armed forces became the cornerstone of the military institution, which forced the removal of politically active officers. Donald Harrison highlighted that "Cardenas eliminated from the officer corps men who had come up through the revolutionary army by virtue of politics and favoritism."[38] Cardenas focused on developing a leaner, more efficient, and loyal armed forces. Another structural change made by Cardenas, in effort to reduce its military power, was the separation of two separate military entities (the Army and the Navy). These changes, followed by a strict development of loyal armed forces that led to stabilization of internal politics, prepared the government to the transition of a civilian-controlled state.[39]

After 71 years of a single party (PRI) controlled-presidency, democratization tested the loyalty of the military institutions to the state for the first time. During the PRI years, the military was in the shadow of its civilian authority. When President Miguel Aleman took office in 1946, as the first civilian head of state since the revolution, a "Non-written Civil-Military Pact" was established between the civilian leadership of the PRI and the Mexican military. This pact set the conditions for the President to grant

[36] Ibid., xvi–3.

[37] Camp, *Generals in the Palacio: The Military in Modern Mexico*, 20.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., 19–21.

absolute respect to the military institutions, and in turn, for the military to give equal respect to its civilian leadership. However, the Mexican armed forces had obliged to follow a set of rules, doctrines, and institutional norms that were established since President Calles took office. The stagnation of a military that had developed an institution loyalty to a singular party and has yet to evolve its structure has caused friction in this democratization process. Unlike some other countries in the region where democratization has led to demilitarization, Mexico's democracy has coincided with militarization as it enters into a state of internal security issues. Civil-military relations have been tested because these new security dilemmas challenge civilian autonomy and legitimacy.[40]

2. A Profound Civil-Military Relation

The "Non-written Civil-Military Pact" is the framework for the close relationship between the Mexican Armed Forces and the PRI. Constitutionally, the Mexican Armed Forces were designed to be a "professional and apolitical institution."[41] Nevertheless, the embedded military within the PRI has created an institutional crisis as it violates the principles of a democratic state led by civilian authority. The Mexican constitution that has been questioned within its own institutions—as it faces new security challenges and attempts to position Mexico in the global stage—establishes the constitutional framework under which the Mexican Armed Forces operate. The public and other international players continue to challenge the redirection of the Mexican military mission and its role concerning internal security.[42]

Politicians have traditionally ignored the missions and roles of the Mexican Armed Forces. After six iterations of the National Defense Plan, which outlines five separate roles for the Mexican military, the Plan has yet to determine a role for the Mexican Armed Forces in the global arena. The Constitution of 1917 limited the use of the Mexican Armed forces abroad during peacetime; however, the internal roles are

[40] Gallardo, *Always Near, Always Far: The Armed Forces in Mexico*, xix–xx.

[41] Ibid., 23.

[42] Ibid.

somehow defined, but continually questioned by the public. The Mexican Army and Air Force are responsible for the following: 1) defend the integrity, independence, and sovereignty of the nation; 2) ensure internal security; 3) provide assistance to the civilian sectors in cases of public needs; 4) conduct civic and social activities for the development of the country; and 5) assist in disaster relief and maintain order to help reconstruct the affected areas.[43] The Navy (SEMAR) serves two stated missions: the use of naval power to ensure external defense, and the assistance in internal security matters; however, recently, the Navy has been more involved in assisting SEDENA. The collaborative efforts in building a functioning-joint environment are rare in the history of these two institutions. After President Calderon assumed the presidency, he tasked SEDENA to elaborate a Sectorial Plan of National Defense, as an instrument to plan and conduct military activities in accordance with the priorities and objectives identified in the National Development Plan.[44] This document is equivalent to the U.S. National Security Strategy, and is an attempt to provide a sense of transparency on the military's new role as it prepares to combat the internal criminal organizations. The way in which the Mexicans confronted this issue was somehow different from how the United States prepared to assist the Mexican military. The two military structures and cultures were so different from one another that cooperation became a constant challenge.

3. A Divided Defense Ministry

The structure of the Mexican armed forces is complex and different from all the other militaries in the Western Hemisphere. President Lázaro Cárdenas introduced a structural change that had the potential to reduce the military's power and expand its range of skills; he divided the Mexican Armed Forces, the Secretariat of War (SEDENA) and Navy (SEMAR), into two autonomous departments, which left the Mexican Air Force subordinate to its army counterpart.[45] The effects of these structural changes are

[43] Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional, "Mision," SEDENA, http://www.sedena.gob.mx/index.php/conoce-la-sedena/mision.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Camp, *Generals in the Palacio: The Military in Modern Mexico*, 23.

still felt today. Other military organizations that are independent from the Army and Navy command structures include the Corps of Military Police, Special Forces units, and the Presidential Guards.

In February 2013, President Peña-Nieto ordered both defense ministries to develop a Joint National Defense Policy. Inigo Guevara Moyano explained, "this policy should lead to a redefinition of the Mexican Defense system and its linkages with other sectors of the federal government."[46] The rivalries between these military institutions hindered the way they jointly operated. The new internal security challenges forced these institutions to work together. What remain unknown is whether this is the beginning of a General Staff or Joint Chief of Staff. Nevertheless, both ministries maintain a very linear structure with extreme loyalty to their civilian leadership. Figure 2 displays the advisory relationship and command reporting line of the Mexican Armed Forces.

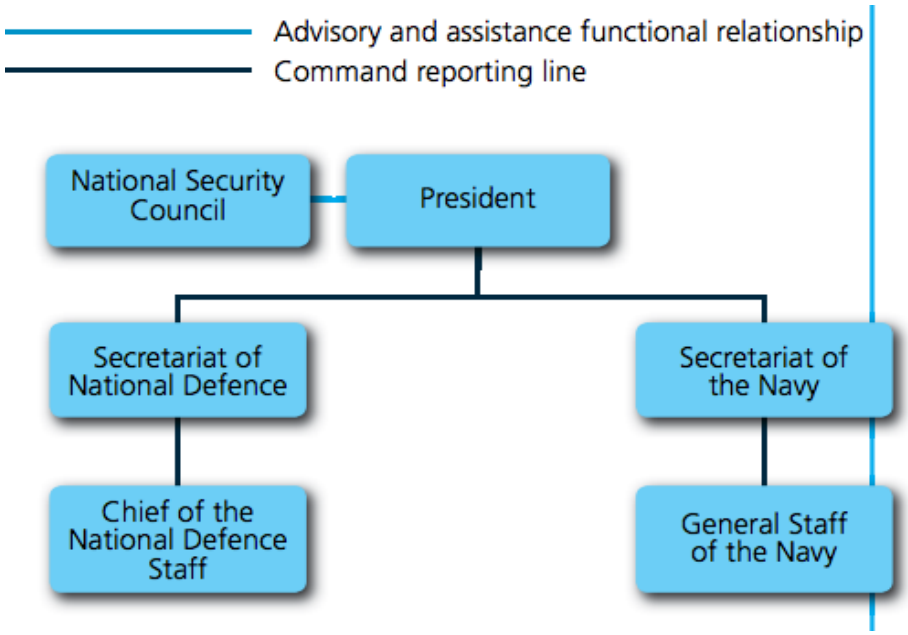

Figure 2. Division of the Mexican Armed Forces.[47]

[46] Inigo Guevara Moyano, "Comando Y Control: Polítican De Defensa Y Planeación Militar," MexicoSeguridad, http://www.mexicoseguridad.mx/site/?p=26.

[47] "A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and the Caribbean: Mexico."

4. Transformation and Evolution

Unlike its Northern counterpart, the Mexican military had acted mainly in internal affairs. In the early part of the twentieth century, it was formed to execute light infantry and guerrilla warfare operations. Military presence throughout the whole country allowed them to dissuade insurgencies. During the PRI era, the Mexican Armed Forces took additional responsibilities. According to Guevaro Moyano, "the Army began implementing disaster relief operations as part of its mission portfolio, and participated in national vaccination, literacy, nutrition, and forestation campaigns, which created a strong bond between the civilian population and the military."[48] Nevertheless, the military role has dramatically changed in the last decade, because they have been redirected to combat the security threats caused by the transnational criminal organizations.[49]

This evolution and modernization of the Mexican military has brought U.S. Armed Forces and Mexican Armed Forces closer; however, trust issues remain a relevant factor as these two cultures try to collaborate to combat the security challenges of the twenty-first century. Cultural barriers must be overcome in order to provide the proper security cooperation initiatives while producing effective trust-building policies.

B. CULTURE

1. Professionalization

The professionalization of the armed forces is the key to a successful civil-military relation. Professionalization of the armed forces could be viewed or portrayed differently depending upon how the civilian authorities define the roles and responsibilities. The professionalization of the forces entails two distinctive capabilities. First, it focuses on developing the critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and leadership/management competencies through a developmental education process at all levels. Second, it concentrates on increasing technical proficiencies of its military

[48] Inigo Guevara Moyano, *Adapting, Transforming, and Modernizing under Fire: The Mexican Military 2006–11*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, 2011, 7–8.

[49] Ibid.

members in their specialties or subject of expertise. The cultural tendencies of this extremely vertical institution tend to concentrate its efforts in the latter, rather that first one. The Mexican Armed Forces are viewed as a very professional institution; however, it could increase its ability to effectively produce a more efficient military force. Decision making only truly occurs at the higher ranks, producing a stagnant force unable to produce effective systematic changes. The delegation of authority and responsibilities is limited among the ranks.

Unlike the U.S. Armed Forces, Mexican non-commissioned officers do not have an active role in leadership and decision-making. During a Non-Commissioned Officer Academy (NCOA) mobile training team (MTT), conducted by the Inter-American Air Forces Academy (IAAFA) at the Heroico Colegio Militar in 2011, the Mexican Armed Forces refused to allow non-commissioned officers to attend the course. Instead, they selected company grade officers to attend this leadership mobile training course designed for non-commissioned officers.[50] The professional development of non-commissioned officers had been mostly limited to technical aspects of "professionalization." This concept does not make sense as the institution prides itself on the efforts in developing a professional transformation in its forces. According to SEDENA,

> The transformation of the Armed Forces is sustained by its Military Education System, with its striving for academic perfection, which results in efficient operational and logistical capacities in the Army and Air Force. In addition, the military revises procedural practices in the troops' military and specialist training building an Army that is each day more professional and better prepared in tune with the demands of national security.[51]

In recent years, the human rights practices of the Mexican military have brought negative attention to the institution. With international pressure, the Mexican Government has engaged in developing its forces into a more professional institution.

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[50] Recorded in the *IAAFA Non-Commissioned Officer Mobile Training Team after Action Report* in 2011.

[51] Gallardo, *Always Near, Always Far: The Armed Forces in Mexico*, 30.

During President Felipe Calderon's administration, professionalization of the Mexican military police force, by mirroring its training and development of those in the United States and Chile,[52] determined that the culture of this institution needed to change. However, change was difficult when the institutional culture superseded the real necessities of the organization.

2. Extreme Vertical Culture

The traditions instilled in the Mexican Armed Forces are an important element to understand the way this institution is organized. From the early stages in their military development, subordination has been seen as one of the most critical components in its structure. An extreme vertical culture of individuals is defined as one who holds the essence of a hierarchical organization devoted to comply with the orders presented from superiors, regardless of the consequences. In other words, the tendency of accepting the actions imposed by higher-level officials, without giving it an ounce of thought or critical thinking, and consequently dismissing one's role and true responsibility to the organization and country, is very common in the Mexican Armed Forces. This section will attempt to portray the negative effects of the extreme vertical culture in the Mexican military. More specifically, we would argue that this phenomenon has caused a systematic stagnation of the development of its profession of arms core, both in the officer and the non-commissioned officer core, and has also created the platform of an ethical dilemma that encourages illegal actions, while increasing the mistrust of citizens, public officials, and other international institutions (such as the U.S. Armed Forces). To better illustrate the argument, this section will convey the contributing factors for this culture, and provide a statement on how it has affected military-to-military relations.

The first common factor in Mexican military culture is influenced by a deep social structure that forces a concrete separation between the enlisted and the commissioned officers. It is common that this social struggle unarguably embraces the social distinction between the supposed elites (officers) and the apparent unprivileged workers (non-commissioned officers (NCO)). The social distinction creates an

[52] Schaefer, Bahney, and Riley, *Security in Mexico: Implications for U.S. Policy Options*, 40.

environment where the least privilege tends to serve the elites at all commands. The separation is prevalent at all levels in the hierarchy of the Mexican military; however, it is radically more intense when it is between these two social classes (officers and non-commissioned officers). Like the U.S. military, the respect shown between these officers and NCOs is clear; however, the social distinction and separation is completely dissimilar to the ones developed by their Mexican counterparts. The U.S. military attempts to integrate these two entities. An example of this is the consolidation of Officer and Non-commissioned Officers clubs within the institutions. Another example is the roles and responsibilities of *First Sergeants* position as the commander's liaison and advisor on administrative issues for all members in an organization (to include commissioned officers within a unit). The differences and unfairness in treatment of these two groups will create an intense discontent among the ranks. According to the military scholar General Jose Francisco Gallardo, "soldiers are also routinely denied access to rights such as family and medical leave, while they are forced to work horrendous hours and humiliated by their superiors."[53] The economic division between these two classes becomes apparent in the infrastructure built to accommodate each of these two groups.

The second factor influencing this culture is its force formation and development programs that continue to inculcate this type of culture. Subordination becomes the norm, as is continually evident in the actions taken by all military members through those intensive years of military indoctrination. From the very beginning, the intent of school formation (basic training–boot camp, as we like to call it in the United States) is to transition individuals from a civilian to a military professional. However, the radical disciplinary techniques instilled throughout the formation stage, often continue for the remainder of the operational and developmental career. Enlisted military are taught to be specialists in their technical fields; however, there is no emphasis toward building a credible force that engages in critical thinking, problem solving, or more importantly, leadership attributes within the organization. Dissent is not only seen as insubordination, but disrespect of authority. The U.S. Armed Forces allow and encourage dissent from

[53] Marion Lloyd, "Desertion Rates Plague Mexico: Poor Pay, Tough Conditions, Drug Cartels Blamed," *Houston Chronicle*, http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Desertion-rate-plagues-Mexico-s-army-Poor-pay-2584599.php.

subordinates, as it is a principle of followership techniques learned throughout their PME schools. The developmental education (professional military education) programs barely emphasize these critical traits and continue to implement similar radical techniques used in the formation schools. There is little room for junior officers and non-commissioned officer to fully develop their potential contributions towards this institution, enabling them to just follow the orders given without any consciousness about the repercussions or truly living by the institutional core values. The extreme vertical culture dominates in a Mexican military that continues to evolve into more efficient armed forces.

There are many negative factors for this type of culture in institutions that require a lineal relationship of authority; however, at the same time, there is so much responsibility to its citizens. The first negative effect involves the stagnation of the professional development programs that are considered the instrument in which a military member is molded to a professional of arms. According to the Secretary of National Defense (SEDENA) in Mexico, professional military education (PME):

> is a process of physical, mental, and cultural transformation, of men and women to get convinced and committed, and to voluntarily surrender the country and its institutions for their loyalty, skills, abilities, intelligence, and life itself, if necessary, in meeting the duties imposed by the armed services.[54]

This education is what we refer to as the developmental process of a military member within an institution. This process becomes less useful when individuals are not given the opportunity to exercise their problem solving, critical thinking, and leadership skills. A culture devoted to an extreme lineal hierarchy, especially during this developmental process, tends to hinder the ability of the member to retain and use those skills. The member must be free to exercise different skills without hierarchical pressure due to rank or basic training techniques that are not relevant to this type of development. Many Mexican PME programs do not accomplish their intended purpose, due to the lack of leadership-based experiential material to which they are exposed. One might think that this is a necessary skill as it is explained in detail in many of the military training and

[54] Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional, "Educación Militar," SEDENA, http://www.sedena.gob.mx/index.php/educacion-militar.

educational objectives. These extreme vertical culture becomes a huge road block for those who want others to succeed, but the system will not allow it without a commitment to educational skills, or by shutting down the opinions of those who wish to speak. Roderic Ai Camp highlights that this exaggerated discipline, within article 14 of the Escuela Superior de Guerra (ESG), emphasizes the reprimand of any actions or intentions of individuals who try to go against the school of thought.[55] The inability to ensure a quality force that identifies itself through institutional values such as patriotism, loyalty, service-before-self, and necessary developmental skills (critical thinking, leadership, followership, effective dissent, and problem solving), becomes vulnerable to the second negative effect of this type of culture.

Another effect of this culture is its tendency to create an environment where defilement of policies within the institution becomes difficult to avoid. It is typical to see many commanding officers abusing their authority to mandate their subordinates on tasks that are not related to the institution, and are solely for their personal gain. In Mexico, it is common to see soldiers washing their commander's personal vehicle during duty hours. This becomes more of an opportunity cost issue within the institutions.

Citizens are weary of the constant violations of human rights and perceptional abuse of governmental power. The arbitrary actions of these groups can be attributed to many issues, but the reality is that these activities are endorsed within a culture that has failed to recognize the importance of the professional development of all its members, and consents to follow orders without measuring the consequences of the clear violations they have committed. In 2008, the Mexican Human Rights Commission reported 983 complaints against the Mexican Armed Forces throughout Calderon's presidency.[56] The report also highlighted that "seventy-five percent of these complaints were tied to the military's fight against organized crime."[57] In 2013, the Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that between January 2007 and mid-November 2012, the National Commission on Human Rights in Mexico issued detailed reports on 109 cases in which members of

[55] Camp, *Generals in the Palacio: The Military in Modern Mexico*, 42–43.

[56] Schaefer, Bahney, and Riley, *Security in Mexico: Implications for U.S. Policy Options*, 5.

[57] Ibid.

the Army determined that military members—to whom it had delegated mostly fighting drug trafficking—had committed serious human rights violations, and received 7,350 complaints of military abuses.[58] Many examples of military abuses and atrocities have plagued the Mexican security and defense institutions. Nevertheless, this culture must evolve in order to effectively confront the new challenges of the twenty-first century, and the internal and international pressures to change.

The United States Armed Forces need to focus on solutions that require time and total commitment through the ranks for these institutions to eradicate an "old-school" of thought. For this, a well-established trust-building mechanism must be in place in order to better understand and assist the Mexican military. The enlisted must be seen as the "backbone" of the military institution, and equal opportunity for professional development must be instituted to create an environment of fairness and justice for all members within these institutions. The armed forces must restructure their professional development programs, reemphasizing the performance of experiential training focused in critical thinking, problem solving, leadership, followership, team-building, and the ability to produce an effective argument. The armed forces must employ solid formation and developmental education institution, to promote an emphasis on ethical institutional values, community service, and nationalism. The U.S. military must understand that military power is not solely based on capabilities, but on its efficiency and effectiveness to operate within its institution. The development of human resources as the most critical weapon in the military is what makes this martial institution powerful and trustworthy; however, this is easier say than done as we recognize the challenges the Mexican Armed Forces faces today.

C. CHALLENGES OF THE MEXICAN ARMED FORCES

The Mexican Armed Forces faces several challenges in the twenty-first century. These include the continuing development of a professional volunteer force, maintaining its legitimacy by prioritizing in human rights and the rule of law, and strengthening

[58] Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2013: Mexico," Human Rights Watch, http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/mexico?page=1.

defense diplomacy with other governmental and international institutions. These challenges must be recognized, but none more than the constitutional challenge it faces today. Jose Gallardo describes it by expressing that "the Mexican Armed Forces must cease to be the 'army of the revolution' and must instead transform into the 'army of the republic.'" [59] The constitutional text of 1917 has limited the Mexican military to evolve in synch with the rest of the State entities.[60]

A high level of desertion among the lower ranks has also placed the military forces in a state of quandary. Trained soldiers have taken over part of the TCO's fighting against the same constitution they once swore to protect. The Zetas—one of the most ruthless TCOs in Mexico—take the name of ex-soldiers who join this criminal organization. Many experts say that the desertion problems have grown dramatically since the militarization in Mexico as the solution to combat the TCOs. Since 2000, an average of 16,000 soldiers per year have deserted the Mexican Armed Forces—an average of around eight percent per year. In contrast, in 2006, the U.S. Army reported approximately 0.65 percent of desertion. There is a lucrative way out for military members who feel they can use their military skills in these types of criminal organizations. Mexican officials understand how this critical issue affects the military institution. Roderic Ai Camp conveys, "It's part of a larger issue which the military has always feared."[61] The Mexican Armed Forces must continue to uphold its ability to protect in order to continue to keep itself as one of the most respected institutions in the country.[62]

Another relevant challenge faced by the Mexican Armed Forces is the internal division between the Army, the Navy, and other security coordinating agencies. The lack of coordination efforts between the various defense and security entities has halted the effectiveness of these institutions. SEMAR and SEDENA are two autonomous ministries

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[59] Gallardo, *Always Near, Always Far: The Armed Forces in Mexico*, 149.

[60] Guevara Moyano, *Adapting, Transforming, and Modernizing*, 34–35.

[61] Marion Lloyd, "Mexican Army's Soldiers Fleeing for Drug Cartels," *Houston Chronicle*, http://www.chron.com/news/nation-world/article/Mexican-army-s-soldiers-fleeing-for-drug-cartels-1839077.php.

[62] Ibid.

whose rivalry in every aspect of the institution (prestige, roles, budget, and authority among others) continues to affect joint collaboration between these two institutions. According to R. Benitez and A. Sotomayor, the Mexican Armed Forces are the least institutionalized with the least civilian control military in Latin America, which in turn, hinders the its ability to construct a solid security community.[63] From 2008—2010, there have only been 10 meetings total among staffs of SEMAR and SEDENA.[64] Military experts continue to question the interoperability capacity among the Mexican Armed Forces. Both ministries are separated and structured differently (see Appendix A and B).[65] The Mexican President becomes the only central civilian authority between these two institutions creating a perception of a weak civilian control and management over the Mexican Armed Forces. Nevertheless, there is a focus on bringing the operational jointness between these two ministries. Additionally, the new imposed role of internal security has mounted additional pressures not only to the military, but also to its civilian leadership. As the Mexican military continues to battle these security threats, it also increases its visibility for legitimacy among its citizens and the international community.

The defense budget has also been a topic of challenges within the Mexican Armed Forces. Despite the dramatic increase (see Figure 3) in the Mexican defense budget, it continues to be topic of uncertainty, as it illustrates a "case of the relationship between the unequal access to information and accountability."[66] The Mexican defense budget and resources allocated within the different services seems inadequate for the security challenges it faces. Therefore, higher competition for these resources becomes a common trend between the services.

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[63] Raúl Benítez and Arturo C. Sotomayor, "The Mesoamerican Dilemma: External Insecurity, Internal Vulnerability," in *Mexico's Security Failure: Collapse into Criminal Violence*, ed. Paul Kenny, Monica Serrano and Arturo C. Sotomayor (New York: Routledge, 2012), 192–194.

[64] "A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and the Caribbean: Mexico." Red de Seguridad y Defensa de America Latina, accessed February/4, 2014, http://www.resdal.org/ing/atlas/atlas12-ing-21-mexico.pdf.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Benítez and Sotomayor, "The Mesoamerican Dilemma," 191.

The Budget

Year	Defence Budget (in US$)	Government Budget (in US$)	GDP (in US$)
2008	4,706,150,462	173,350,821,168	949,576,000,000
2009	4,681,259,477	170,865,419,735	866,336,000,000
2010	4,875,854,577	184,312,515,198	995,918,000,000
2011	6,247,798,082	220,937,481,045	1,185,215,000,000
2012	6,287,762,898	221,932,173,241	1,207,820,000,000

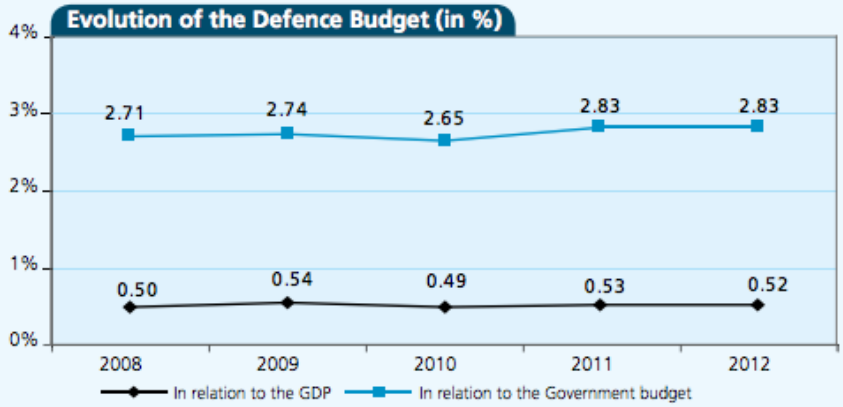

Figure 3. Mexican Defense Budget[67]

The defense budget is appropriated to each ministry as it intends to modernize its operational capabilities to combat current and future threats. Mexico has increased its UAV capabilities seven times greater than the rest of the LATAM countries. The Mexican defense budget since 2006 has increased from .44 percent to .52 percent per GDP in 2012. In contrast, the U.S. defense budget is seven times larger than the Mexican defense budget.[68] Nevertheless, the World Bank also indicates that SEDENA's military budget (relative to the size of its economy) is below 100 countries, including Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, Gabon, and Mali. In comparison to the Western Hemisphere, Mexico defense budget is lower most of the countries in this

67 "A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and the Caribbean: Mexico."

68 "Military Expenditure (% of GDP)," The World Bank, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS?order=wbapi_data_value_2012+wbapi_data_value+wbapi_data_value-last&sort=asc.

region (see Figure 4). Given the internal security threats posed by TCOs, it can be argued that there is a lack of military budget allocated to the Mexican Armed Forces as they face a critical security role in the country.[69]

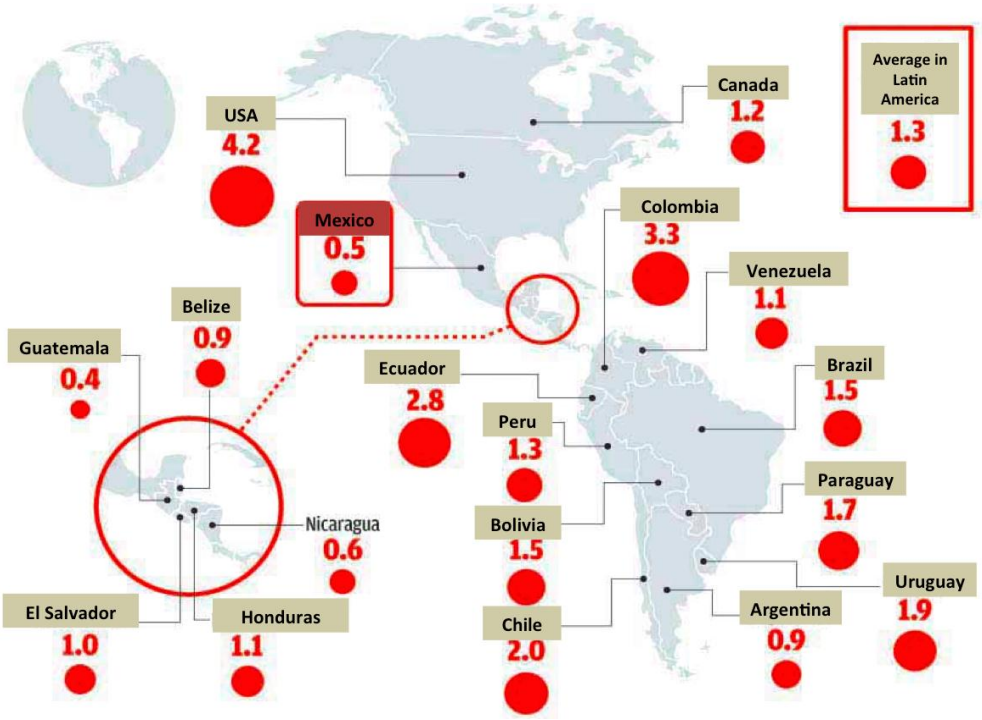

Figure 4. Defense Budgets in the Western Hemisphere (in Relation to GDP)[70]

Furthermore—like its counterpart in the north—each of the services will internally allocate their fiscal budget for operations and sustainment. Figure 5 illustrates the composition of the Mexican defense budget from 2008 until 2012. The representation of the defense budget is unevenly distributed among the different services. More than 60 percent of the defense budget is allocated to the SEDENA. Close to 80 percent of the defense budget is allocated towards salaries and personnel benefits. Yet, the challenges described earlier can also be attributed to the budget constraints that continue to haunt these institutions. The U.S. military must recognize the Mexican Armed Forces faces in

[69] Ignacio Alzaga, "El Presupuesto De SEDENA, De Los Mas Bajos Del Mundo," El Milenio, http://www.milenio.com/policia/presupuesto-Sedena-bajos-mundo_0_221977824.html.

[70] Ibid.

order to institute a legit security cooperation establishment that is suitable and effective for both institutions, regardless of the political or economic conditions.

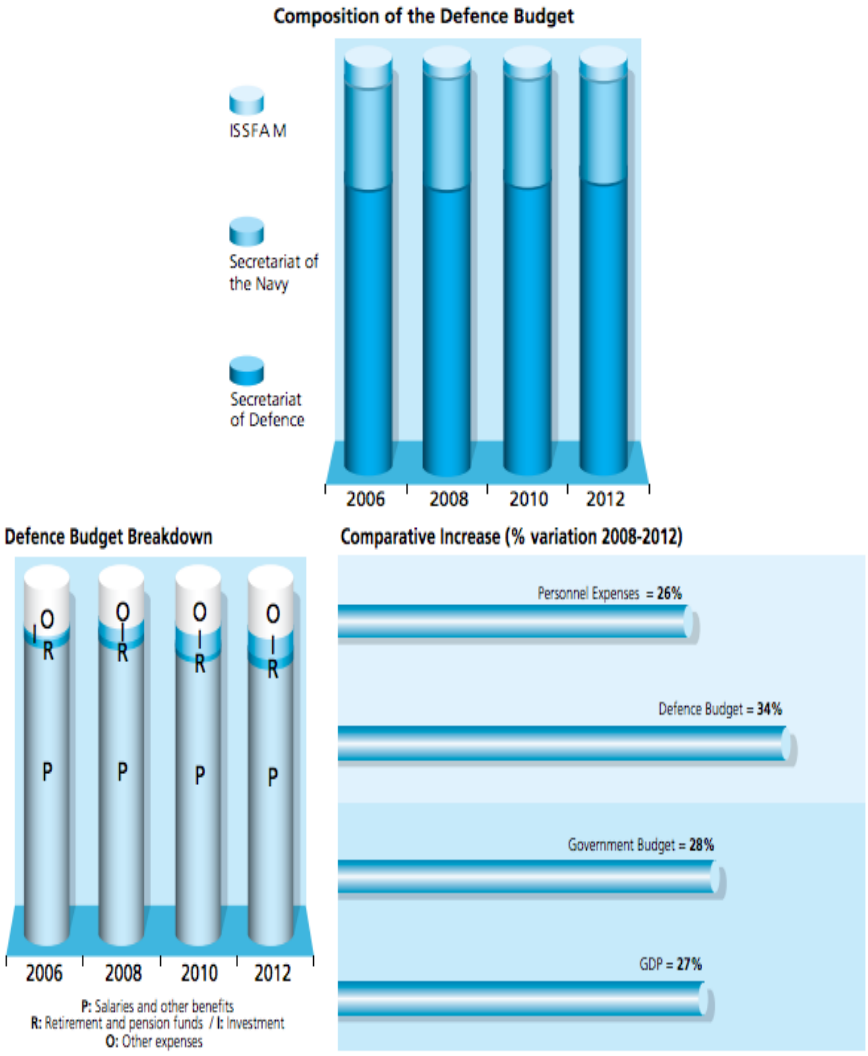

Figure 5. Defense Budget Breakdown[71]

D. CONCLUSION

Despite the historical emphasis, cultural barriers, and the challenges faced by the Mexican Armed Forces, the conditions in which this institution has evolved is placed directly between the civil-military relations established throughout its creation. This section presented an historical background of the Mexican Armed Forces, to include its

[71] "A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and the Caribbean: Mexico."

profound civil-military relation, and the evolution and transformation of the force. Additionally, it elaborated cultural differences, in particular, the professionalization efforts compared to the U.S. Armed Forces, and an extreme vertical culture that continues to challenge the development of an efficient institution. Finally, the discussion of the professionalization, defense structure and joint collaboration, and budget challenges that the Mexican military faces in the beginning of this century, help us better understand and appreciate an institution that has been caught in the middle of a rollercoaster of bilateral relations between these two countries.

III. UNITED STATES–MEXICO MILITARY RELATIONS

This chapter presents an historical background of the U.S.-Mexico military relations during critical historical events, and assesses the conditions in which the Mexican military continues to be reluctant to establish a collaborative relationship with its Northern neighbor. It analyzes military-to-military engagements and sentiments during the Mexican-American War, post-revolutionary engagements, WWII, the Cold War, and post 9/11. It also argues that the military-to-military cooperation between Mexico and the United States has been based on security threats and economic interests, but with the constant denominator "distrust." This chapter also examines the BPC process, USNORTHCOM strategies, and policies toward security cooperation in Mexico, and presents a statistical analysis of the security cooperation efforts, through International Military Education and Training (IMET) data. Finally, it argues that the building partnership capacity initiatives continue to focus on current security needs, rather than as trust-building alternatives that will build the pillars of a strong military relation.

A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF U.S.-MEXICAN MILITARY RELATIONS

During the past two centuries, U.S.-Mexico relations have been a rollercoaster of conflict and cooperation. Until 1940, a continuous divergence had best described the relationship between these two nations. According to Jorge Dominguez, "this image of bilateral conflict long held sway, consequently, as the most likely style for their relation."[72] While the United States often pursued its expansionist and economic policies through military means, Mexico was the country in Latin America most affected by the U.S. expansionist policies. The most evident example of this was the Mexican-American War 1846–1848, which marked the beginning of a rocky relationship between these two military institutions.[73]

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[72] Jorge I. Dominguez, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict, Contemporary Inter-American Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 8.

[73] Ibid.

1. The Mexican-American War

The Mexican American War was an historical event that would eventually change the cultural mindset of the Mexican military towards its Northern neighbors. Guided by the "Manifest Destiny," (the concept in which the United States had the moral obligation to expand its territory to the Pacific Coast), U.S. President James Polk offered to purchase New Mexico and California from Mexico, and argued that the Rio Grande River was the border between the two countries. Additionally, President Polk argued that General Santa Anna had ceded this territory after the Texans captured him during the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836. The Mexican government refused Polk's offer, and in retaliation, Polk sent General Zachary Taylor to Corpus Christi to establish a military fort. The Mexican government considered these actions an act of war. On April 24, 1846, a clash occurred between the Taylor forces and Mexican Army of the North, followed by a full-scale U.S. invasion. Polk's hostility towards Mexico was evident because he had already planned to go to war with Mexico before this incident; however, the war took an unprecedented turn when the U.S. forces arrived in Mexico City in the famous Battle of Chapultepec on September 13, 1847.[74] Figure 6 displays the different battles during the Mexican-American War.

[74] "Timeline: U.S.-Mexico Relation," Council on Foreign Relations, http://www.cfr.org/mexico/us-mexico-relations-1810-present/p19092; Mathew Kachur and John Sterngass, *The Mexican-American War* (Milwaukee, WI: World Almanac Library, 2007), 20–21.

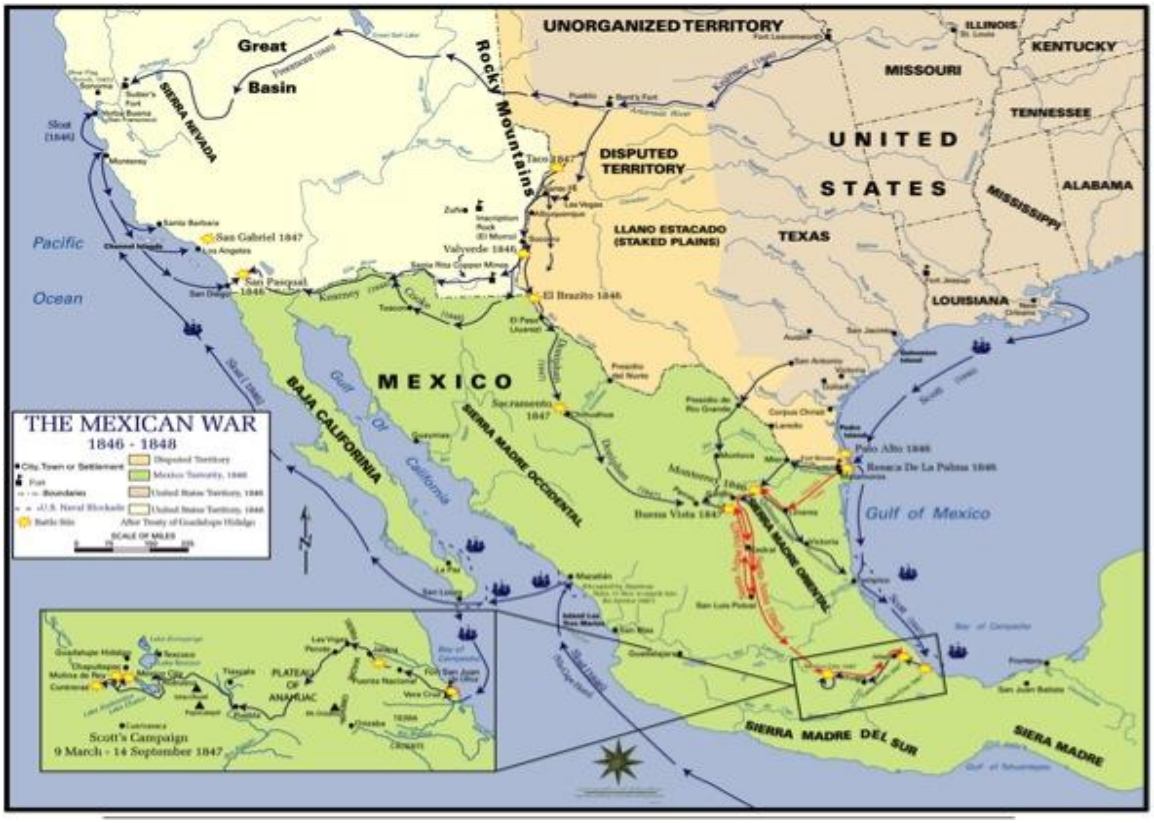

Figure 6. The Mexican American War[75]

The Mexican-American War was in its final chapter when the U.S. forces advanced toward the Chapultepec Castle to topple the last Mexican resistance that was defending this fort. Prior to the war, this fort was the home to their military training academy. When the battle started, several Mexican cadets were involved in this conflict. Against the orders of General Nicolas Bravo, who ordered the cadets to retreat to safety, six young cadets refused to relinquish their post, and fought the Americans until the end. This act of patriotism echoed throughout the entire country and brought a sense of nationalism. The sacrifice of the *Niños Héroes* (heroic children) has been forever engraved into Mexico's history, particularly in its military culture. The naming of their

75 Kenneth A. Starskov, "The Birth of American Operational Art: Winfield Scott's Mexico City Campaign during the Mexican-American War of 1846–1848," *Small Wars Journal*, 2013, http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-birth-of-american-operational-art-winfield-scott%E2%80%99s-mexico-city-campaign-during-the-mexi.

future military academy, Heroico Colegio Militar (HCM), is influenced by the historical significance of the cadets' actions in projecting loyalty, self-sacrifice, and their indiscriminate service to their nation.[76]

Two years later after the seizure of Mexico City, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo formally ended the Mexican-American War. The treaty obligated Mexico to yield more the 500,000 square mile of valuable territory, which is present-day California, Arizona, New Mexico, and parts of Colorado and Nevada. The treaty also mandated the United States to pay $15 million in compensation for war-related damages to Mexico. According to Dominguez,

> The heavy human, territorial, and economic toll of the war alarmed the nation, then on the brink of disintegration. Mexico's attitude henceforth would be marked with distrust toward is northern neighbor. The United States became a catalyst for Mexican nationalism.[77]

The resentment caused by the consequences of the Mexican-American War is present in many Mexicans today, but in particular, within the military ranks. Cadets in the HCM are often reminded of the heroic acts of the *Niños Héroes* during the U.S. invasion in 1847. The HCM has become a symbol of the patriotic acts against U.S. supremacy.[78] The name for this conflict offered a clue to the sensibilities between both countries. The arrival of U.S. General Winfield Scott in Mexico City was also a critical point in history, which the Mexicans continue to resent. The U.S flag was raised in the Mexican National Palace (see Figure 7). In the United States, this conflict was referred to as the "Mexican-American War," but in Mexico, was defined as the "War of the North American Invasion."[79]

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[76] "Los Niños Heroes: The Mexican-American War 1847," Mexonline, http://www.mexonline.com/history-ninosheroes.htm.

[77] Dominguez, *The United States and Mexico*, 9.

[78] Ibid., 8–9.

[79] Thomas Skidmore, Peter Smith, and James Green, *Modern Latin America*, 7th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 50.

Figure 7. U.S. Troops in Mexico City[80]

After the Mexican-American War, U.S.-Mexico relations became more stable. Despite economic relations that favored both countries during the Porfirio Diaz Regime and U.S. administration of President Rutherford Hayes, the bilateral cooperation between the military institutions was distant. Nevertheless, the economic progress of the Diaz era had its cost. The elites and wealthy prospered, while the vast majority of the Mexicans faced extraordinary poverty. Rebels against this social injustice took advantage of the current conditions to revolt against the Mexican government. The Mexican Revolution of 1910 would spark the beginning of a dense and complicated relationship between the United States and Mexico.[81]

[80] U.S.-Mexican War: Occupation of Mexico, PBS, last modified March 14, 2006, http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/war/occupation_of_mexico.html.

[81] Ibid., 53–54.

2. U.S. Intervention in Veracruz

In 1913, General Victoriano Huerta killed President Francisco Madero during a coup attempt. The United States worried that Huerta could not maintain order or protect the Americans and their private properties in Mexico. In April 1914, the Mexican Army detained nine American soldiers for allegedly entering a fueling station in Tampico. Admiral Fletcher pressed for an immediate intervention in Veracruz under his command. Under the pretext of stopping a German ship (Ypiranga) that was carrying weapons to the Hueristas, President Woodrow Wilson sent U.S. Marines to the port of Veracruz to seize this key location. On April 21, U.S. battleships bombarded the city for hours, while the civilian populace battled against the American occupation. Figure 8 shows an image of U.S. vessels arriving in the port of Veracruz. Despite the Huerta's army resistance, the U.S. Marines were able to control the port of Veracruz within hours. Hence, the American forces occupied Veracruz for almost seven months, seizing extensive amount of weapons from Mexicans.[82]

[82] John M. Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 305–308.

Figure 8. U.S. Navy ships arriving in Veracruz in 1914 [83]

The 6,000 forces who stormed the port of Veracruz on the morning of April 21, 1914, were not only fighting against Huerta's Constitutional army, but the will of the people of Veracruz and the cadets of the Naval Academy in the heart of this port. According to SEMAR, naval cadets did not care for their lives while pledging their dedication to service and military values of honor, loyalty, and a strong love for their country. The invasion inflamed anti-American sentiment in Mexico, and later defined the cultural enigma in the birth of a rivalry between these two nations. In honor of the courage demonstrated by the cadets during this historic event, the 1949 Mexican Congress changed the name of the Mexican Naval Academy to the Heroica Escuela Naval Militar (Heroic Naval Military Academy). Like its army counterpart, the Mexican Naval Academy was named after the heroic acts of Mexican cadets against U.S. Armed forces. The U.S. intervention in Veracruz and the acts of valor by the Mexican people—especially by the naval cadets—were fully embedded throughout the formation of all Mexican naval officers. According to Craig Deare, "the officer corps of the Army and the Navy have been deeply ingrained into their professional ethos through the truth and

83 Secretaria de Marina, "21 De Abril 1914," SEMAR, http://www.semar.gob.mx/s/armada-mexico/21-abril-1914.html.

myths of the attacks on their homeland by the invaders from the north."[84] Figure 9 shows the image of U.S. Marines raising the flag at the port of Veracruz, continuing to pour more salt in the wound. After the Mexican Revolution, both governments attempted to better their relations. Nevertheless, other historical events forced bilateral cooperation between these two military institutions.[85]

Figure 9. U.S. Marines raising the flag in Veracruz in 1914[86]

3. U.S.-Mexico Relations During WWII

During WWII, U.S.-Mexico military relations became relevant, and for the first time, security cooperation became a critical factor in national security between these two nations. In the late 1930s, the United States shifted the focus of its strategic policies towards the defense of the whole continent. To satisfy national security concerns, both countries saw the need to commence bilateral military cooperation. The emergence of global threats, such as Hitler's aggressive move in Europe and the Spanish Civil War, forced the United States to reshape its relations with Latin America, particularly with

84 Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface," 2.

85 Secretaria de Marina, "21 De Abril 1914."

86 "La America De Origen Inglés Contra La De Origen España." Hispanoamerica Unida, http://hispanoamericaunida.com/2013/03/24/la-america-de-origen-ingles-contra-la-america-de-origen-espanol/.

Mexico. These events forced the United States to address its differences with Mexico. The U.S. assumptions of Mexico's lack of commitment to democracy, and Mexico's wariness of a covert U.S. imperialistic agenda, continued to mount certain distrust between them.[87]

Despite this distrust, both countries started to cooperate on defense issues. The United States began to play a more committed diplomacy role with their Southern neighbors. An example of these actions was when "President Harry S. Truman became the first U.S. President to visit Mexico City, laying a wreath at the foot of the U.S.-Mexican war monument to the *Niños Héroes*."[88] This type of political maneuver was indicative of the importance of bilateral collaboration during this period for the United States. After recognizing the strategic importance of the stability of the Latin American countries, and the possible influence of German propaganda in Mexico, the United States felt the importance to win Mexican trust by supporting a hemispheric defense negotiation. This new strategy dictates that the U.S. would now provide the necessary means to support Mexico so that it could defend itself against any foreign attack or domestic disorder. The United States felt this was an opportunity to close the bilateral gaps with Mexico. Despite U.S. efforts to engage in defense cooperation with Mexico, the Mexican government remained closed to military cooperation until 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Not until then, did the Mexican government decide to enter a military alliance with the United States against Axis Alliance.[89]

According to Garza, the height of military alliance between Mexico and the United States occurred in WWII from 1941 to 1945. After the Mexican tanker *Potrero del Llano* was sunk by a German U-boat in 1941, Mexico decided to join the Allies in an effort to neutralize the common threat. In 1942, official cooperation between these two entities was institutionalized. The creation of the Joint Mexican-U.S. Defense commission was established with the purpose "to study problems relating to the common

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[87] Maria E. Paz, *Strategy, Security and Spies: Mexico and the U.S. as Allies in World War II* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 1–8.

[88] Council on Foreign Relations, "Timeline: U.S.-Mexico Relation."

[89] Paz, *Strategy, Security and Spies*, 48–49.

defense of the United States and Mexico, to consider broad plans for the defense of Mexico and adjacent areas of the United States, and to propose to the perspective governments the cooperative measures which, in its opinion should be adopted."[90] The increased defense cooperation between the United States and Mexico allowed the U.S. military to operate in Mexican territory under several restrictions.[91] Garza best explains,

> During this time, Mexico—for the first time—made several military concessions to the United States For instance, overflying agreements were reached and U.S. aircraft were allowed to land at Mexican airfields on their way to Panama. Several radar systems were also established on Mexican territory. Perhaps the most important concession by the Mexican government was to allow a limited number of U.S. military personnel on Mexican soil (in most cases, U.S. military personnel had to wear civilian attire). Despite these concessions, Mexico rejected the establishment of U.S. military bases on its territory and the possibility of a joint military command because these implied the deployment of U.S. troops to Mexico and the possible subordination of the Mexican Army to a U.S. officer.[92]

During this period, the U.S. military conducted training and exercises with their southern counterparts. This period marked the greatest defense cooperation in the history of both countries.

After WWII, a new style of bilateral relations reigned until the 1980s. According to Dominguez, Mexico and the United States "deliberately or inadvertently invested little effort in improving the quality of bilateral relations or deepening the opportunities for institutional collaboration."[93] This style of cooperation projected what would become the norm, and the estrangement between these two military institutions throughout an important historical event in U.S. history: the Cold War.

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[90] "Executive Order 9080—Joint Mexican-United States Defense Commission." National Archives, http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/09080.html.

[91] Rafael H. Garza, "The U.S. and Mexico: Trading Partners, Reluctant Military Allies" (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School), 14.

[92] Ibid., 14.

[93] Dominguez, *The United States and Mexico*, 10.

4. U.S.-Mexico Relations During the Cold War

During the Cold War, bilateral defense relations became stagnant. The strategic view of traditional armies was no longer relevant as a deterrent force during this period. Nuclear weapons were the main factor to consider. The Cold War had more of an ideological emphasis, which was concentrated in the counterbalance of Communism, not only in Latin American, but also in the rest of the world. The United States viewed countries in the Western Hemisphere, in particular Mexico, as allies against this new threat. Foreign policies between these two countries were based on "bargained negligence,"[94] as they intended to ignore each other. Despite the common external threats both countries faced, they failed to develop a strategic alliance that could help them collaborate at the political and military level against these tribulations.[95]

Consequently, military relations between Mexico and the United States were diluted, as both faced a limited economic interdependency and an inactive foreign policy. Mexico collaborated as little as possible with the United States, while the country sought to avoid political confrontations with its northern neighbor. Mexico was the only country in Latin America that did not display any efforts in building military relations with the United States. According to Dominguez,

> Mexico did not support most U.S. military policies in the multilateral institutions of the Western Hemisphere from the 1950s through the 1980s, nor did it construct bilateral institutions for security collaboration with the United States to combat crime, guerrillas, or communist threats.[96]

There was minimal communication between these two military entities. Once again, the historical and geopolitical conditions deteriorated the bilateral military relations.[97]

David Mares best summarizes the U.S.-Mexico relations during the Cold War as follows:

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[94] Ibid., 10.

[95] Garza, "The U.S. and Mexico," 16–17.

[96] Dominguez, *The United States and Mexico*, 3.

[97] Garza, "The U.S. and Mexico," 3.

> While Mexico's grand strategy has focused on its northern neighbor, the United States has only sporadically viewed Mexico as relevant to its grand strategy. During the early 1970s, first the drug trade and then political instability in Mexico stirred minor U.S. interest in rethinking the relationship with Mexico. That interest increased during the late 1970s, as Mexico's oil and gas industries boomed, international energy markets tightened, and the Central American foreign policies of the two countries increasingly diverged. Whether in energy markets or in Central America, however, Mexico remained a relatively minor irritant to a U.S. government more concerned about challenges from the oil producers' cartel (of which Mexico was not a member), the Soviet Union, Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and the U.S. Congress.[98]

A relationship based on indifference changed briefly to conflict during the Ronald Reagan and Miguel de la Madrid administrations in the 1980s. The death of a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent in Mexico became the source of tension between these two administrations. The U.S. government blamed Mexican government officials for involvement and for the lack of security. This highly publicized incident continued to deteriorate the bilateral military relations, and raised questions regarding the legitimacy and ability of the Mexican government. Consequently, the relations would take a different direction during the democratization of Mexico in the new millennium.[99]

5. U.S.-Mexico Military Relations Post 9/11

Mexico's leap to democratization in 2000 brought many hopes to the bilateral defense cooperation between these two countries. The poorly defined reforms, in conjunction with weak governmental institutions in Mexico, allowed criminal organizations to expand their businesses, and control larger territories in Mexico.[100] In 2001, President Vicente Fox and President George W. Bush pledged to collaborate in migration, energy, and security issues, and sought to start a new chapter of bilateral

98 David R. Mares, "Strategic Interests in the U.S.-Mexican Relationship," in *Strategy and Security in U.S.-Mexican Relations Beyond the Cold War*, ed. John Bailey and Sergio Aguayo Quesada (San Diego: University of California, 1996).

99 Dominguez, *The United States and Mexico*, 11–12.

100 Luis Rubio, *Mexico Matters: Changes in Mexico and its Impact upon the United States*, Wilson Center Mexico Institute, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/rubio_mexico_matters.pdf, 28.

cooperation. The expectations for improved relations were raised by both sides; however, the tragic events of September 11, 2001 changed political and security environments between these two nations.[101]

The need to establish a national security structure was eminent. In response to the actual and perceived threats, the United States created the Department of Homeland Security and the USNORTHCOM. According to Deare, "many bilateral issues were 'securitized'—in particular, the key issues of free trade and migration—reigniting tensions between the two neighbors."[102] The formation of USNORTHCOM also brought new concerns for the Mexican military. In the past, Mexican military authority had a direct line to the OSD, the Joint Staff, and all individual services. Furthermore, its limited security assistance fund, which was controlled and managed by USSOUTHCOM, was now under a new command that was inexperienced in security cooperation. The Mexican military authorities showed their discontent and highlighted their objection of the new defense structural reforms in the U.S. These institutional reforms created some obstacles in bilateral cooperation.[103]

In his thesis based on several interviews, Jeffrey Burkett noted open sources and literature that emphasized bilateral collaboration between the U.S.-Mexico defense cooperation levels, and were categorized in the lower end of the cooperation spectrum throughout the mid-2000s. He also indicated that, "given that defense and security missions overlap bi-nationally, the ideal level of military cooperation includes the coordination of planning efforts that address common issues that have a defense nexus."[104] Figure 10 highlights the different levels of military cooperation and points out the current level and desired level these institutions must reach.[105]

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[101] Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface," 3–4.

[102] Ibid., 4.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Jeffrey W. Burkett, "Opening the Mexican Door: Continental Defense Cooperation," (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School), 18.

[105] Ibid.

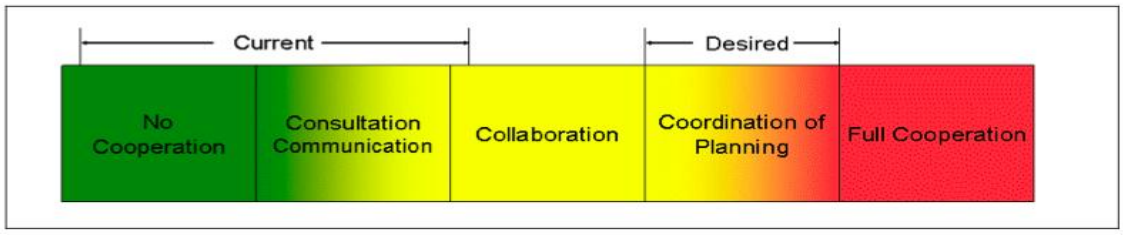

Figure 10. Spectrum of U.S. Mexico Levels of Defense Cooperation[106]

There are other positive consequences to these institutional security reforms, along with other events that jump-started the defense collaborations. In 2005, a cooperative venture between the United States, Canada, and Mexico, called the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, brought a new light to economic opportunities and the prevention and response to security threats in the North American continent. The goals of this trilateral cooperation initiative "created a nexus between USNORTHCOM, the Mexican military, and our interagency partners."[107] The symbolic support of the Mexican military during Hurricane Katrina marked the beginning of bilateral defense cooperation between these two nations. Furthermore, President Felipe Calderón published a national strategy directing greater cooperation between these two institutions, marking a transcendental moment in bilateral military affairs.

President Calderon's efforts to realign Mexico's security cooperation initiatives with the United States, led to the development of a U.S. assistance package to Mexico to combat drug trafficking and organized crime. In 2008, the Mérida Initiative took effect as it was originally created to: "1) break the power and impunity of criminal of criminal organizations; 2) strengthen border, air, and maritime controls; 3) improve the capacity of justice systems in the region; and 4) curtail gang activity and diminish local drug demand."[108] The first part of this initiative was primarily focused on increasing the technological capabilities to confront these issues. Consequently, the strategy focus changed to equipping and training. Finally, during the Obama administration the focus became institution-building, while enhancing economic development and community-

[106] Ibid.

[107] Renuart and Baker, "U.S.-Mexico Homeland Defense: A Compatible Interface," 4.

[108] Ribando Seelke and Finklea, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation*, 6.

based social programs. The U.S. Congress appropriated more than $2.1 billion for Mexico under this initiative from FY2008 to FY2013, of which $1.3 billion has been handed over.[109] Despite Department of State (DOS) management of this program, the U.S. military has played a key role in the execution of funds. The Mérida Initiative has become a critical component to the establishment of a stronger military relation between these two nations in the past five years.[110]

($ in millions)

Account	FY2008 Supp. (P.L. 110-252)	FY2009 (P.L. 111-8)	FY2009 Supp. (P.L. 111-32)	FY2010 (P.L. 111-117)	FY2010 Supp. (P.L. 111-212)	FY2011 (P.L. 112-10)	FY2012 (P.L. 112-74)	Account Totals	FY2013 Request	FY2014 Request
ESF	20.0	15.0	0.0	15.0[a]	0.0	18.0	33.3	**101.3**	35.0	35.0
INCLE	263.5	246.0	160.0	190.0	175.0	117.0	248.5	**1,400.0**	199.0	148.1
FMF	116.5	39.0	260.0	5.3	0.0	8.0	Not applicable[b]	**428.8**	Not applicable	Not applicable
Total	**400.0**	**300.0**	**420.0**	**210.3**	**175.0**	**143.0**	**281.8**	**1,930.1**	**234.0**	**183.1**

Sources: U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations FY2008-FY2014.*

Notes: ESF=Economic Support Fund; FMF=Foreign Military Financing; INCLE=International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement.

a. $6 million was later reprogrammed for global climate change efforts by the State Department.

b. Beginning in FY2012, FMF assistance is not included as part of the Mérida Initiative.

Table 1. FY08–FY14 Mérida Funding for Mexico by Aid Account and Appropriations Measure[111]

The current military relations under President Peña-Nieto continue to evolve, however, the security reforms that affect U.S.-Mexico cooperation under the Mérida Initiate have yet to be announced. Nevertheless, Peña Nieto has pledged to continue U.S.-Mexican security cooperation, although with more emphasis on reducing the violence in Mexico.[112] Recent leaks of sensitive U.S. information have altered the bilateral cooperation. Consequently, the President Peña Nieto administration appears more suspicious of overt U.S. involvement in security operations in Mexico than with the previous government. Additionally, after the presumed release of U.S. government

[109] Ibid., 18.

[110] Ibid., 7–9.

[111] Ibid., 8.

[112] Ribando Seelke "Mexico: Background and U.S. Relations," 18.

spying on Mexican government officials, several steps were taken to tighten up the accessibility of U.S. military members in Mexico. According to Clare Ribando Seelke, "the Mexican government notified U.S. agencies operating in Mexico that Internal Ministry will be the approving authority on all requests for new Mérida-funded training or equipment made by Mexican government entities."[113] Previous and ongoing programs were not affected by this new policy, and bilateral military cooperation has expanded. The U.S. Army Major General Francis G. Mahon—NORTHCOM's Director for Strategy, Plans, and Policy—conveys, "during the past two to three years, as the Mexican Army and Mexican Navy have taken on a larger role beyond internal security issues, our relationship with them has really grown and expanded through security cooperation."[114] Both administrations continue to advocate bilateral engagements that would help cease the violence in Mexico.[115]

Despite the increase in military-to-military collaboration in the past few years, some scholars continue to emphasize a sense of distrust that pervades these two institutions. According to Paz,

> Today the problems are different; drugs and illegal immigration have supplanted the Axis as the major threat, but curiously enough, the attitudes of both countries are still the same. The United States regards its neighbor with suspicion and remains unwilling to share intelligence with the Mexican authorities because it is concerned with the possibilities of leaks and corruption. Mexico, on the other hand, fears domination by its neighbor. In the eyes of most Mexican people, the prospect of joint military exercises remains to this day a source of considerable unease. Overcoming this distrust and fear is a challenge for the future.[116]

Other scholars also believe that distrust is the key component that prevents governments from establishing policies and programs that can close the gap between these two institutions. Some key questions remain, if indeed the bilateral collaboration between these two institutions is set for the long haul. Are the security cooperation

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113 Ibid., 12.

114 Donna Miles, "NORTHCOM Pursues Closer Engagements with Mexico," U.S. Department of Defense, http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=119074.

115 Ribando Seelke and Finklea, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation*, 10–12.

116 Paz, *Strategy, Security and Spies*, 8.

initiatives bridging the gap of *distrust* between both entities? Are the BPC mechanisms used by DOD, USNORTHCOM, and the Security Cooperation Office (SCO) forging an enduring partnership based on trust, and not solely on needs? To answer these questions, we must analyze the prior and current strategies and policies concerning security cooperation initiatives with Mexico.

B. ANALYZING U.S. STRATEGIES/POLICIES

In an environment where military members are obliged to establish diplomatic relations and direct engagement with partner nations, future leaders analyzing U.S. strategic policies toward military engagements with Mexico is crucial. This section will attempt to explain the defense assistance programs currently in place, and the role of the different entities (DSCA, USNORTHCOM, and SCO) involved in this process. Furthermore, this section will evaluate the effectiveness of the International Military Training Education (IMET) program towards building an enduring and trustworthy defense relationship. Finally, this section will identify areas for improving a trust-building mechanism, after analyzing the historical background of U.S.-Mexico military relations.

1. Military Assistance Programs to Mexico

The U.S. Security Assistance program plays a critical role in the bilateral cooperation efforts between the United States and Mexico. The U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, and the Annual Appropriations Acts for Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Program authorize security assistance to partner nations.[117] These programs provide the platform to assist in the development of Mexico's institutional and defense capacities. It includes grants for military training, education, and equipment. The Department of State manages these programs; however, most of these are implemented and executed by the Department of Defense. The different types of security assistance programs are labeled in Figure 11.

[117] Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "Security Cooperation Overview and Relationship," in *Security Assistance Management Manual* (Washington, DC: Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2013), http://www.samm.dsca.mil/chapter/chapter-1#C1.1.

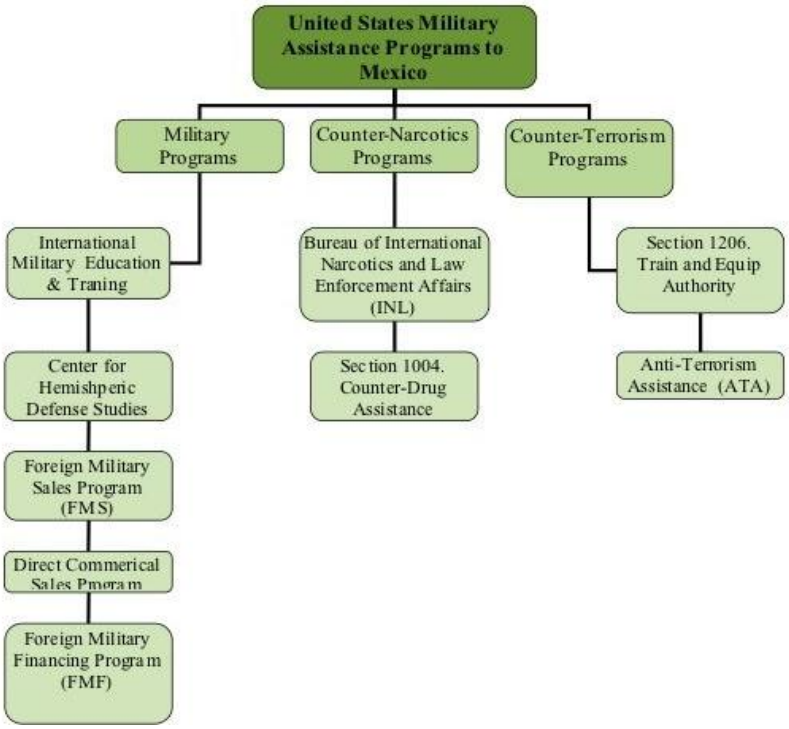

Figure 11. United States Military Assistance Programs to Mexico[118]

The counter-narcotics and terrorism programs are managed by other entities within the government, but the U.S. Armed Forces can implement any of these. These programs are budgeted and restricted to support specific objectives within the security assistance realm. For example, the type of training and equipment authorized in the counter-narcotic programs could only be tied to the assistance in those particular areas. Nevertheless, IMET becomes crucial in the security cooperation strategy, as it intends to be the most influential tool for DOD to establish stronger relations with their Southern counterparts. Other programs such as the foreign military sales (FMS), foreign military financing (FMF), and the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS) are also programs that are executed through the U.S. armed forces. Still, one of the most important programs the military operate is IMET.

As established in the *Security Assistance Management Manuel*, IMET's objective is to "encourage effective and mutually beneficial relations and increased understanding

[118] Jonathan Agustin Gonzalez Torres, "U.S.-Mexico Military Cooperation: From WWII to the Mérida Initiative," Americas Program, http://www.cipamericas.org/archives/3365.

between the United States and foreign countries in furtherance of the goals of international peace and security; develop rapport, understanding, and communication links; develop host nation training self-sufficiency; improve host nation ability to manage its defense establishment; and develop skills to operate and maintain U.S.-origin equipment."[119] It has truly become the most essential apparatus in DOD's arsenal for educating and training the partner nations' military for future leaders. According to Richard Grimmet, a specialist in national defense, "IMET may also be the only instrument available that might assist in changing the attitudes of military-dominated governments and lead to the reaction in human rights abuses and greater levels of democratic government."[120] This will also be true in Mexico, even though it is not a military-dominated government.

IMET is divided into PME and specialized technical training. PME provides the foundation for a professional force that has the capacity to lead their organizations in the future. Both areas are critical in the professional development of a military member; however, PME schools provide the most effective ways to expose American values, and produce competent leaders with a better understanding of U.S. policies. PME programs are one of the most valuable tools in supporting U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. Department of State denotes that the exposure of American values, military doctrine, and combined military-to-military exercises facilitates interoperability and future engagements with coalition forces.[121]

Since 2008, the budget for security cooperation has almost quadrupled. Calderon's strategy against organized crime, and his pledge to collaborate with President Obama on security and the war against drugs, has indeed boosted the assistance Mexico receives from the U.S. government. In retrospective, the funds for IMET have only slightly doubled. This means that most of the budget for security assistance programs has

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[119] Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "International Training," in *Security Assistance Management Manual* (Washington, DC: Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2013), http://www.samm.dsca.mil/chapter/chapter-10#C10.6.

[120] Richard F. Grimmett, *International Military Education and Training Program* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2004).

[121] "International Military Education and Training (IMET)," U.S. Department of State, http://www.state.gov/t/pm/65533.htm.

been allocated to counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism activities. On the other hand, from 2008 to 2012, almost 65 percent of the Mexican students attending IMET-funded courses are not in PME programs. Table 2 displays the IMET assistance to Mexico from FY08 to FY12, in comparison with the rest of the military assistance programs. This table also highlights the percentage of PME students within the IMET program for those same years.[122]

International Military Education & Training Assistance to Mexico (FY08-FY12)					
Fiscal Year	Total in Military Assistance Program	Total IMET-1 & IMET-X	Total Number of IMET Students	Total Number of Students in PME Programs	Percentage of Students in PME Programs
FY08	$4,565,466	$651,011	27	13	48.1%
FY09	$4,676,919	$898,216	120	34	28.3%
FY10	$12,594,623	$881,035	61	22	36.1%
FY11	$15,198,424	$1,204,862	49	22	44.9%
FY12	$18,328,734	$1,366,750	47	18	38.3%
Totals	$55,364,166	$5,001,874	304	109	35.9%

Table 2. International Military Education & Training Assistance to Mexico[123]

PME is also an important program that helps to develop common understanding among allies. Unfortunately, this emphasis has not been the case with Mexico. In 2008, two Mexican cadets participated in officer formation schools through the exchange program. One Mexican cadet attended the U.S. Naval Academy, and another attended the U.S. Air Force Academy. It was not until 2012 that four Mexican cadets attended West Point.[124] No U.S. Armed Forces member has attended any of the Mexican military academies or PME schools. The fact that the exchange program is not working as it

122 "Foreign Military Training and DOD Engagement Activities of Interest," U.S. Department of State, http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rpt/fmtrpt/.

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

should brings many questions to bear. One of them is whether there is a true desire for collaboration on both sides, and if the process is working to accomplish its intended objective. For this, we must first analyze the IMET process and the roles, responsibilities, strategy, and policies of the players involved.

2. Understanding the Building Partnership Capacity Process

Building Partnership Capacity (BPC) programs provides policy and procedures for execution of security cooperation and assistance activities that are funded by the U.S. government in efforts to build partner nations capabilities by enhancing security forces capacities in counterinsurgency, counter-drugs, counterterrorism, or to support U.S. military and stability operations, or multinational peacekeeping operations. BPC is paramount for achieving national security objectives. BPC performs as a management system of key components that establish a process for providing security assistance to partner nations. The BPC case process is organized into five different phases (see Figure 12).

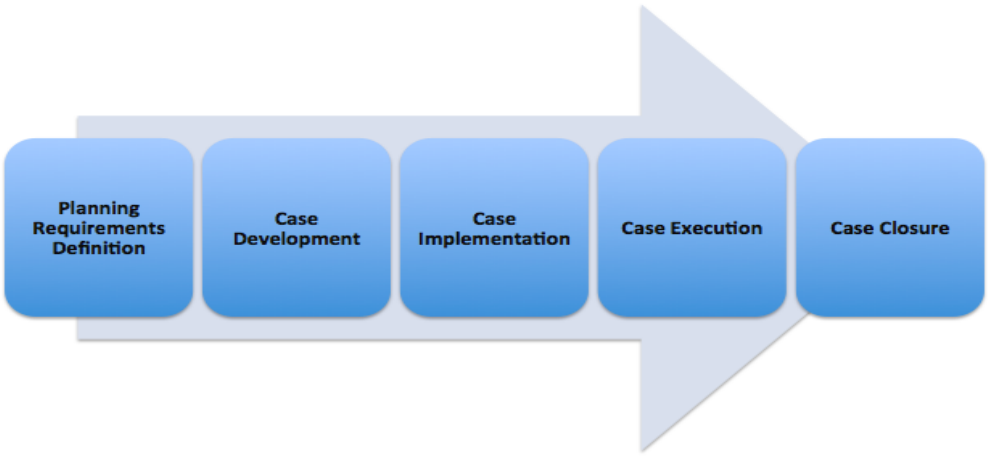

Figure 12. Building Partnership Capacity Process

The first phase of the BPC process is the planning and requirement definition. According to the *Security Assistance Management Manual* (SAMM) in this initial phase, "the USG Requesting Authority, which is usually the Geographical Combatant Command (CCMD), but could also be another DOD or non-DOD agency, defines and initiates the

BPC requirement to support specific USG objectives." [125] Laying down the foundation of the type of assistance the combatant commander values toward that particular country is important to highlight throughout this process. The implementing agency (IA) can perform an evaluation to determine the most suitable solution for this requirement. Then, the U.S. government (USG) requesting authority then submits an actionable letter of request to the IA. This phase initiates the formal request of the BPC process.[126]

During the second phase, Case Development, the IA and the requesting authority produce a letter of offer and acceptance (LOA) that includes all the requirements and the expenses. Additionally, "the DSCA Case Writing Division (CWD) conducts a quality assurance review, prepares the final version of the LOA, and coordinates review and approval by DSCA and DOS."[127] Coordination of the specifics components for this request is paramount to ensure the services and/or defense article meet the USG objectives. Finally, the IA prepares a document that informs our partner nation of U.S. expectations in the fulfillment of this request.

During the third phase, case implementation, the IA accepts the offer in an automated system and DSCA authorizes the funds to be transferred to provide the service and/or defense article. Finally, the Defense Finance Accounting Service implements the case and gives the obligation authority to the IA. The IA is now authorized to use appropriate funds to provide the security assistance to the benefiting country. Ongoing coordination between the IA and the Security Cooperation Office (SCO) is critical in identifying the procedures for execution.[128]

The fourth phase is the case execution. The IA procures the defense articles and services according to DOD regulations. The IA retains oversight of the transportation process and provides assistance with any logistical issues. "After materiel has arrived in country and has been inventoried, the Security Cooperation Organization (SCO) transfers

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[125] Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "Building Partnership Capacity Programs," in *Security Assistance Management Manual* (Washington, DC: Defense Security Cooperation Agency, 2013), http://www.samm.dsca.mil/chapter/chapter-15.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid.

custody and responsibility of the materiel and services to the Benefitting Country and begins end use monitoring (EUM), as applicable."[129] During this phase, it is critical that the IA obligate the funds before they expired. The IA must deliver and meet the requirements set during the initial phase.[130]

The Final phase, case closure, will start as soon as the services and/or material have been delivered. The case closure identifies the security assistance to the benefitting country as complete. The IA must ensure that residual funds are identified for return as soon as possible. When closure activities are complete, USG will then proceed to close the case. Most of the time the IA will develop a final report and/or assessment for the requesting authority to identify lessons learned and address if the required objectives were met.[131]

IMET is conducted under the BPC process, which provides a thorough explanation of the roles and responsibilities for all the actors involved. To better analyze where in the process issues exist, we must understand the three most critical actors in this process. An analysis of their strategic guidance and their roles and responsibilities are crucial in the development of policies that will enable them to build solid cooperation initiatives.

3. Defense Security Cooperation Agency

The *Security Assistance Management Manual* (SAMM) denotes the specific responsibility of DSCA in the BPC process, as the administrator under the direction of the Under Secretary of Defense (Plans and Policy), and guides DOD components and SCOs on the administration and execution of BPC program activities. "DSCA oversees program-level logistics planning, provides financial management, develops and implements program policies, and otherwise assists Requesting Authorities in achievement of BPC program objectives."[132] The role of DSCA plays an important role

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid.

in this process, but it is limited in the tactical and operation decision made by the combatant commanders and the SCO when engaging directly with the benefitting nation. It certainly establishes the rules and guidance on how the funding is utilized and approves the initial request from the requesting authority. From a BPC perspective, DSCA plays more of an administrator role rather than a strategist or planner on how the security assistance will be provided to the partner nation. Nevertheless, it is an important element in the administrative function within this process.

4. U.S. Northern Command

After the tragic event of September 11, 2001, the USG had to make some radical internal changes in order to reestablish the security confidence of its citizens. In 2002, DOD announced the creation of USNORTCHOM with the purpose was to unify different organizations that have focused on homeland defense and civil support missions. USNORTHCOM current mission is to "conduct Homeland Defense and Civil Support operations within the assigned area of responsibility to defend, protect, and secure the United States and its interests."[133] This mission is quite different from the rest of the geographic unified commands. However, an emphasis of cooperative defense structure with Canada and Mexico is crucial to achieve this end state. Nevertheless, it identifies the 'homeland defense' as the key obligation in its area of responsibility (AOR). Figure 13 represents the key areas for USNORTHCOM. Likewise, USNORTHCOM stated vision is "With our trusted partners, we will defend North America by outpacing all threats, maintaining faith with our people and supporting them in their times of greatest need."[134] The words "trusted partners" are important because they identify a strategy that continues to build trustworthiness.[135]

133 "USNORTHCOM Vision," U.S. Northern Command, http://www.northcom.mil/Newsroom/FactSheets/ArticleView/tabid/3999/Article/1891/usnorthcom-vision.aspx.

134 Ibid.

135 "USNORTHCOM History." U.S. Northern Command, http://www.northcom.mil/Newsroom/FactSheets/ArticleView/tabid/3999/Article/1887/usnorthcom-history.aspx (accessed September/18, 2013).

Figure 13. USNORTHCOM Sacred Areas[136]

After its initiation, USNORTHCOM became overwhelmed with homeland defense initiatives, and plainly disregarded the securing partnership role. As Deare explains, for the first few years of its existence, USNORTHCOM heavily focused in its primary mission, the internal defense of the U.S. national territory.[137] The deteriorating security issues that Mexico faced in the last decade led to a stronger collaboration of USNORTHCOM with its southern allies. During President Calderon's administration, the security assistance between the Mexican and U.S. militaries was at its highest. Nevertheless, in the past few years, USNORTHCOM has been committed to continue to raise the security cooperation efforts with the Mexican Armed Forces. The commander's priorities have also changed since USNORTHCOM was created. One of the commander's priorities involves expanding and strengthening our trusted partnerships. This priority is unique, as it focuses on building the capacity through the BPC process.

USNORTHCOM is responsible for a "multi-year planning of BPC activities and strategies for the regions and countries within its theater of operations, documented in the Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP)."[138] This plan supports the commander's

136 "NORTHCOM Basic Briefing." SlideShare, http://www.slideshare.net/robbinlaird/northcom-basic-briefing.

137 Deare, "U.S.-Mexico Defense Relations: An Incompatible Interface," 4.

138 Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "Building Partnership Capacity Programs."

goals and objectives for regional security. Throughout this BPC process, NORTHCOM becomes the strategic guidance regarding in which areas to focus for the security cooperation realm. Additionally, NORTHCOM is responsible for prioritizing, coordinating, and evaluating the success of security cooperation activities in Mexico. NORTHCOM priorities are the pillars in which the requesting authority must perform. A thorough evaluation is necessary not only to identify the areas for improvement, but also to assess if the proper strategy is used towards Mexico. NORTHCOM will depend upon the SCO to drive the commander's priorities through initiatives that meet the overall objectives.[139]

5. Security Cooperation Office

The security cooperation office (SCO) has become one of the most critical elements in this building capacity process. Many times, the SCO is the requesting authority after taking into consideration the marching BPC strategies from USNORTHCOM. When the security cooperation office is not the primary requesting authority, they support the requesting authority throughout the whole process. The SCO also interacts closely with both Mexican military ministries. According to the SAMM, "the SCO is entrusted with communicating BPC program objectives and requirements to Benefitting Country representatives and soliciting their partnership, ...[and] is also familiar with the in-country security and logistics environment."[140] Security cooperation officers must have a diplomatic charisma to ensure that national objectives are met. At the same time, it must coordinate all the training requirements established by the Mexican Armed Forces to initiate this BPC process.[141]

The SCO in Mexico is the link between the Mexican Armed Forces and the U.S. military. For the most part, they are the bread-and-butter of the security cooperation initiatives; however, they are consumed by the realities of a defense relation that continues to struggle in building trust. The SCO has a lot of influence on the type of

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.

141 Ibid.

security assistance provided to the Mexican Armed Forces. Their constant engagements with the Mexican military make them the tip of the arrow for capacity building and military engagements. It is one of the most important responsibilities in the BPC process, as it intends to convey the USG national interests. It is a vital organization in the country team as it also plays a military advisory role at the embassy. It is important to analyze how the current BPC process, along with the strategies and policies, will not work to shape a trusting relationship between these two forces.

6. Theoretical Trustbuilding Approaches

Studies in trust-building approaches between two or more institutions are relevant to the discussion of this thesis. As "trust" becomes the fundamental condition in which both entities depend on to advance each other's interests, several considerations must be taken to understand the trust-building process.[142] We must first identify root causes of this problem, and then acknowledge the need of a systematic process to develop trust between both organizations. A five-step exchange relationship approach and a three-step approach are analyzed to look at the fundamental areas that can potentially help the U.S. armed forces recognize a sound strategy for trust building.

Helbert C. Kelman identifies a trust-building approach between enemies as a possible solution for a conflicting relationship. The exchange relationship, "trust," becomes the overarching extension of these organizations in order to make the relationship work. Nevertheless, Kelman points out that the relationship must be reciprocal. Through Malik's work, Kelman highlights that, "to build a relationship of mutual trust, managers must extend trust to their subordinates, and they must earn the trust of their subordinates by their own trustworthy behavior."[143] Kelman uses an interacting problem-solving approach, where he uses a third party to the resolution of international conflicts. Social and psychological principals also anchor this interactive workshop approach—pioneered by John Burton. A third party through this interactive

[142] Herbert C. Kelman, "Building Trust among Enemies: The Central Challenge for International Conflict Resolution," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 29 (2005): 640, doi: 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.07.011.

[143] Ibid.

process handles the dilemma of trust building by trying to present possible micro-level solutions, while transitioning to the macro-level. The five concepts related in this trust-building approach are: 1) successive approximations of commitment and reassurance; 2) using a third party as a repository of trust; 3) working trust; 4) identifying the uneasy coalition; and 5) establishing mutual reassurance.[144] Although, this approach focuses on a peace-building process, it surely can become an important approach for trust building between both Armed Forces. The establishment of a North American Defense council can perhaps bring our Canadian counter-parts to facilitate in this trust-building approach.[145]

Another relevant trust-building concept targets three different areas in an organization. These have to be looked at closely to truly understand how strategies toward building capacity are intertwined with "trust." According to the three areas in an organization that are key for building trust and sustaining it through a long period of time are leaders, structure, and culture.[146] Organizations must be committed as they reflect integrity, concerns, and results that can be quantified and demonstrated through bilateral actions. The foundation of this process must come from the leaders in order to establish a well-founded trust-building strategy. The development of leaders is essential for "trust" to exist. Once this is done, the structure and culture of an organization can be more easily established for trust-building mechanisms.[147]

C. WHAT ARE WE DOING WRONG?

Building partnership capacity is always a challenge for U.S. government. Building trust, and the mechanism that an institution must commit, is difficult. When analyzing the context in which the international military training is based, we must recognize that funding becomes a showstopper in some security assistance initiatives. The U.S.-Mexico economic, cultural, and security interdependences should provide the

144 Ibid., 640–649.

145 Ibid.

146 Robert B. Shaw, *Trust in the Balance: Building Successful Organizations on Results, Integrity and Concerns* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1997), 100–101.

147 Ibid.

notion that it must be one of our most important strategic allies in the world; however, it does not appear that way. In the early years of USNORTHCOM, there was no sense of urgency to identify the importance of Mexico to the U.S. and the military relations. According to Dr. Downie, "our policy has not demonstrated the necessary level of urgency, or the emphasis to highlight that our combined efforts are necessary to successfully confront the ominous challenge of transnational crime."[148] Improving U.S.-Mexican defense relations should be something that the U.S. must commit to; however, not through building its military capacity to address the security concerns both country face, but focusing in shaping a trustful relation.

The security assistance is an important diplomatic tool, which if used right, can provide the U.S. with effective results in building a true relationship with the partner nations. However, in the case of Mexico, this is not the case. Despite the high amount of funding allocated for security assistance programs, IMET has not become the most instrumental tool for influencing the Mexican military. Additionally, from all the students attending the IMET courses, less than 35 percent attend PME courses (see Figure 14).[149] The rest of the IMET courses involved specialized technical training. This is an issue because the other security assistance programs can pay most of the specialized technical training. It is important to determine that the strategy in place regarding the international training is not to simply focus on building trust, but also to build capacities. It is possible to do this with another country, but not easily with the next-door neighbor to the U.S. Building partnership capacities does not imply future collaboration; however, it does establish the basis for an enduring partnership.

[148] Downie, *Critical Strategic Decisions in Mexico*, 5.

[149] U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Military Training and DoD Engagement Activities of Interest."

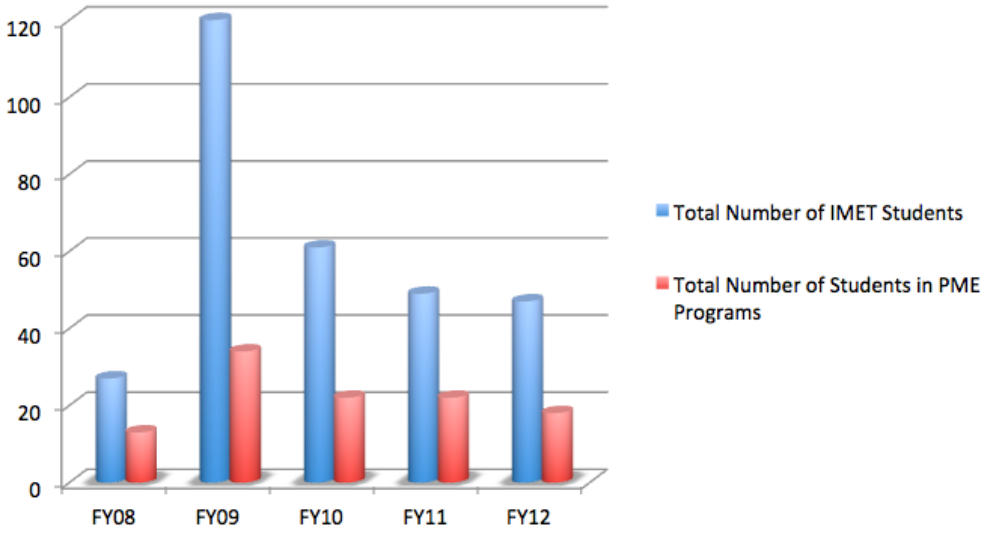

Figure 14. PME student versus total IMET students

The preparation of specialized U.S. forces that can truly understand the cultural, institutional, and historical barriers is indeed a missed opportunity. Before this opportunity is further missed, the U.S. military must be familiar with Mexico in order to plan for any mutual strategy or policy. In the "Joint Operating Environment of 2008," Mexico (the fourteenth largest economy in the world)[150] was considered on the verge of a becoming a "collapsed" state.[151] This inaccurate statement bruised the bilateral military relations between the U.S. and Mexican officials. The sensitivity of this relation must be recognized by all U.S. military members in order to make conscientious and effective policies and strategies.

Finally, USNORTHCOM priorities in regards to the use of IMET for PME are critical to bridging this trusting gap. USNORTHCOM is looking for capacity building instead of looking to future engagements. All actors involved in this process have limited their focus on counter-terrorism and the war against drugs. William Knight states that the "theater security cooperation with Mexico is limited to anti-drug trafficking operations

150 "GDP Ranking." The World Bank, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/GDP.pdf.

151 "The Joint Operating Environment," Federation of American Scientists, accessed November 20, 2013, https://www.fas.org/man/eprint/joe2008.pdf.

and senior officer visits with Mexican counterparts."[152] BPC might not be the most important strategy for an enduring partnership. Noting the historical relations between both countries, a new strategy in security assistance is critical.

D. CONCLUSION

In summary, historical military relations between the U.S. and Mexico provide a better understanding of why distrust has haunted both sides for a very long time. The historical events present a roadblock, which continues to prevent the growth of a trusting relationship between these two entities. Despite U.S. efforts to build the capacities of the Mexican Armed Forces, distrust continues to be the most relevant factor affecting this relationship. The Security Assistance Program becomes a key component in supporting U.S. foreign policies. A complex BPC process that delegates different authorities and responsibilities to different actors in an effort to exercise security cooperation becomes relevant as strategies and policies are developed. Ultimately, strategic decisions and polices must come from the USNORTHCOM, as it begins to establish its full commitment to the Mexican military in efforts to build an enduring trusting partnership.

Finally, in an effort to build partnership capacity, the U.S. security assistance programs are not entirely developed to build security cooperation mechanisms that establish the pillars for a relationship based on trust. An emphasis of using IMET for specialized training, limits the U.S. ability to truly influence and express U.S. commitments to the Mexican Armed Forces. The relations between governments are like a pendulum. Sometimes it is on the right; sometimes it is on the left. Militaries are shaped to protect their countries, despite the government that is in place. The U.S. government should take advantage of current favorable conditions to close the gap between these two military organizations. The limited interaction of these two institutions, whether because of political or historical factors, has identified the need for policies to mold trust building in current military generations. Chapter IV will provide recommended policies that will move forward in that direction.

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[152] William Knight, *Homeland Security: Roles and Mission for the United States Northern Command* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Center, 2008).

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IV. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This final chapter will address the practicality of a trust building model that set the platform for several policy recommendations to enhance U.S.-Mexico military-to-military relations. The policy recommendations are focused in elaborating a continuous process to enable a calculated strategy developing a trust building approach between these two institutions. This section will analyze and use a trust building model of strategic relationships as the framework to provide these policy recommendations that will focus in building an interdependent social structure between these two military institutions. Consequently, this section will argue that the a sound strategy for building partnership trust from USNORTHCOM, the use and expansion of the BPC PME platforms, and a solid policy of institution-building through an indirect approach will pave the way for a trusting relationship. To conclude, this section will summarize the key influences and cooperation elements of the U.S.-Mexico defense relations and highlight some opportunities for further research.

A. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Creating a strategic vision through security cooperation initiatives that will increase military diplomacy and commitment between these two institutions is the most adequate route to build a solid relation based on trust. A model build upon a social exchange framework can be useful in understanding the essence of "partnerships," particularly between international strategic alliances.[153] The following policy recommendations are created not only with the focus on continuing building Mexico defense and security capacities, but most importantly to concentrate in our capabilities to influence a new generation of cross-cultural "superstars" that will lead the way for future military engagements.

[153] Carlos M. Rodriguez and David T. Wilson, *Relationship Bonding and Trust as Foundation for Commitment in International Strategic Alliances, U.S.A-Mexico: A Latent Variable Structural Modeling Approach* (University Park, PA: Institute for the Study of Business Markets, 1999).

1. Using an Integrative Model of Strategic Relationships

To better understand the recommended policies we must first analyze an integrative trust-building model of strategic relationships. This model was developed to further emulate the necessary steps for an interdependent relation based on mutual commitments. The foundation for this model was built upon two different theories: 1) the social exchange theory; and 2) the dependency theory. The social exchange theory assumes "actors behave in ways to increase outcomes they value positively and decrease those they value negatively in relationships."[154] This theory sustains that through interactions between two different entities develop relationships of dependency and interdependency. In the other hand, the "Dependency theory suggests that each participant's behavior produce mutual benefit through exchange and his/her outcome is dependent upon behavior of the other participant."[155] This dependency theory is different from the dependency theory of underdevelopment. In this particular theory, a dependency environment produces the conditions for a stronger and more compatible relationship between two organizations. Bonding methodologies used to create trust and commitment in a relationship produces these conditions. Figure 15 presents the model of these different bonding methodologies as they attempt to establish a strategic alliance based on trust.[156]

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Ibid.

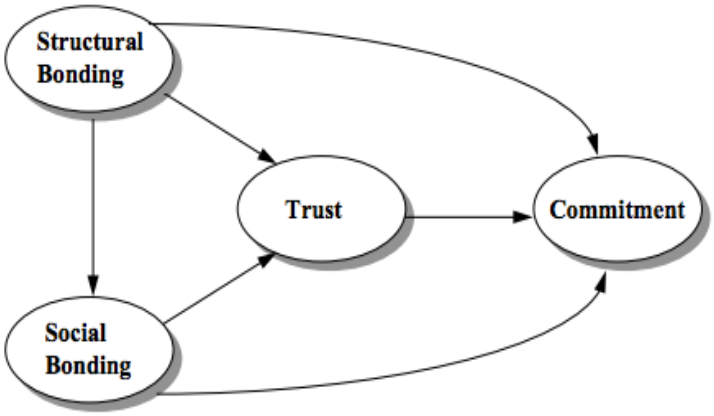

Figure 15. Relationship Bonding in International Strategic Alliances U.S.-Mexico[157]

The two bonding methodologies described by this model are defined as structural and social bonding. According Carlos Rodriguez and David Wilson, "Structural bonds are the multiplicity of economic, strategic, and technical factors that develop during a relationship involving explicit business benefits through technology and market."[158] One might also believe that internal and external security threats are also a means for structural bonding. A trust-building architecture can also be beneficial in establishing processes that can assist in bonding these entities.[159] Subsequently, "as familiarity, friendship, and personal confidence are built through interpersonal exchange, social bonding can measure the strength of personal relationships, and may range from a business to a close personal tie."[160] According to findings in the use and influences of these different methodologies, the perception of trust building for the Mexicans is affected by the social bonding tendencies of this culture. In contrast, Americans are derived by the influence in structural bonding to develop trust. If the U.S. military pretends to develop BPC initiatives in effort to build trust, it must first balance its influence by developing social bonding conditions where personal and institutional interdependence will be major determinants for its level of commitment with the Mexican

[157] Ibid.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Shaw, *Trust in the Balance*, 124.

[160] Rodriguez and Wilson, *Relationship Bonding and Trust as Foundation*.

Armed Forces. As Rodriguez and Wilson noted, "social bonds lubricate the working of the relationship."[161] These relations must demonstrate a sense of commitment and reassurance of well-intended actions by both parties. Distrust must be "reduced slowly, gradually, and on the basis of persuasive evidence that the reality is changing."[162] Bonding with future leaders is critical to enhance defense cooperation. The following policies can assist in the transition of balancing these bondings for greater strategic alliances effect.[163]

2. Policy Recommendations

In efforts to engage in BPC activities that will help us balance U.S.-Mexico defense relations, the following policy and strategic recommendations can be used to develop a committed relationship based on trust. These policy recommendations will help bridge the gap between both military institutions. First, USNORTHCOM could provide direct strategic guidance and control of BPC activities to build "partnership trust." Second, the enhancement of different PME BPC platforms is crucial for long-term effects. Finally, the DOD could develop an institution-building strategy through an indirect approach. These recommendations are relevant to the security cooperation, but most importantly, they will define the commitment and trustworthiness of the U.S. Armed Forces, despite of any political interference between both nations.

a. Policy Recommendation 1: Strategic Guidance for Building Partnership Trust

An active role of USNORTHCOM in the strategic guidance and control of BPC activities is crucial; however, the emphasis should be more in building partnership trust rather than BPC. USNORTHCOM BPC objectives should render focus in developing a relation where "advanced" BPC activities dominate the security cooperation realm between these two institutions. Figure 16 shows the relations and the different categories

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[161] Ibid.

[162] Kelman, "Building Trust among Enemies," 649.

[163] Rodriguez and Wilson, *Relationship Bonding and Trust as Foundation*.

of BPC activities.[164] The most important of these BPC activities is education. Education allows members within the armed forces to truly identify the critical difference between both organizations and adapt to establish a more profound relation. USNORTHCOM can make this happen by ensuring IMET funds are allocated mostly to PME activities.

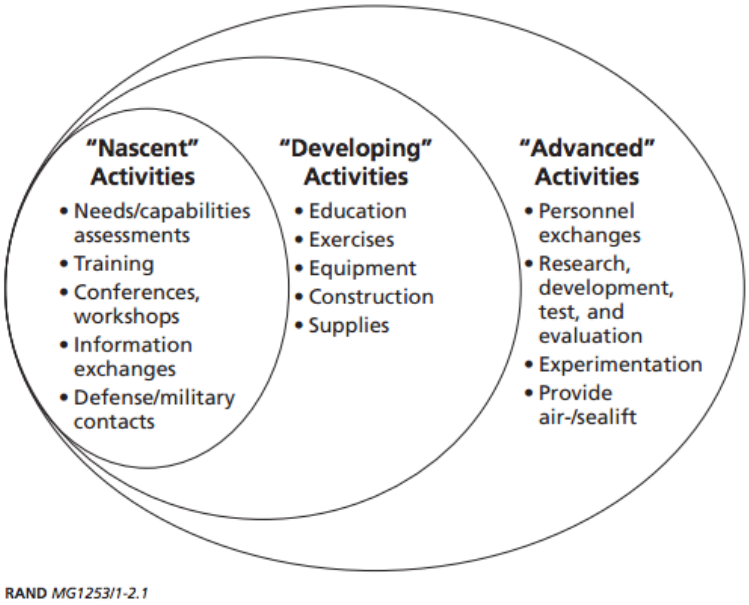

Figure 16. Relationships Among BPC Activities[165]

This strategic plan must be directed to the service components and the SCO. Incorporating a trust-building strategy and directive is the crucial step for the combatant command (COCOM) to develop to establish a BPC environment where the focus is to develop mutual understanding and commitment. This directive should help the service components and the SCO to funnel their influence on BPC activities that will establish long-term engagements with the Mexican Armed Forces. A COCOM guidance that will assist in the professionalization of the Mexican military through enhanced PME program will only help bridge the cross-cultural gap. These programs are the gateway to create a "social bonding" environment, which in turn, will facilitate our ability to project trust and

[164] Ibid.

[165] Christopher Paul et al., *What Works Best When Building Partner Capacity and under What Circumstances?* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2013), 23.

commitment to our southern neighbors. Nevertheless, DOD has a number of BPC platforms that enable and execute PME programs.

b. Policy Recommendation 2: Enhance/Advocate BPC Platforms that Focuses in PME Programs

DOD has a number of PME schools, such as the war colleges and the command staff colleges that provide a unique capability of advancing and preparing future military leaders. These institutions are critical in developing the military diplomacy at the strategic level with all partner nations; however, they are limited to English-speakers and might be too late to develop a cross-cultural conscience between U.S. and Mexican military officers who have been in the institution for a long time. It is difficult to change the culture of an organization from the top. USNORTHCOM can elaborate a concise plan to enhance capabilities to other BPC platforms that can maximize the level of influence for future U.S. and Mexican military leaders. The Inter-American Defense College (IADC), the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), and Inter-American Air Forces Academy (IAAFA) are vital BPC platforms to set the stage for building trust mechanisms through their internal PME programs.

The IADC provides PME and multidisciplinary graduate level courses for senior military members with a focus of better understanding the international environment and the current security issues affecting the Western Hemisphere and the rest of the world. Over 40 percent of the graduates have advanced to general officers rank or high civilian leadership positions within their institutions. The IADC is limited to officers in the operational level, but it offers the language convenience to higher education in the United States. The IADC cadre is composed of partner nation's instructors that provide different cultural and operational perspectives. This BPC platform educates members of the U.S. in a collaborative environment with their LATAM counterparts.[166]

WHINSEC is another effective BPC platform that focuses not only in the technical training capabilities, but also in distinctive PME and leadership programs.

166 "About IADC–Overview," Inter-American Defense College, http://www.colegio-id.org/overview.shtml.

WHINSEC programs were designed to support USSOUTHCOM and USNORTHCOM strategic objectives. This institution has "developed and implemented meaningful and effective training in the Profession of Arms that includes democracy and human rights, ethics, and stewardship, making its program one of the best offered by military educational institutions anywhere."[167] Its PME courses are developed not only for mid-level and junior officers, but also for noncommissioned officers. These courses are also taught in Spanish and but also include U.S. military students within their certified PME programs. This scenario provides opportunities of direct engagement with future military leaders in the Western Hemisphere.

IAAFA also provides one of the most critical PME capabilities for partner nations and U.S. service members. Since 2008, the PME programs have advanced BPC initiatives to new heights. IAAFA conducted the first ever U.S.-developed mobile PME programs for officers and non-commissioned officers. Besides the great volume of different technical training capabilities, it also produced one of the most desired PME programs in the Western Hemisphere. Like WHINSEC, IAAFA has the capability to conduct mobile training team (MTT) courses. In 2011, IAAFA deployed two MTTs to the Heroico Colegio Militar to conduct PME programs to Mexican Army, Air Force, and Naval junior commissioned officer. U.S. Air Force officers and Noncommissioned officers attend the certified IAAFA PME courses where they directly engage with all future LATAM military leaders. According to Captain O. Martinez, "the impact these courses are making in terms of building partnerships and building partner nation's capacity in Latin America has been tremendous. The impact that is now building cultural savvy United States Air Force Airmen is immeasurable."[168] IAAFA has dramatically increased its BPC role and scope since 1943, evolving its training and PME programs to meet partner nation's requirements and U.S. strategic objectives.[169]

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167 "Overview," Western Hemisphere Institute of Security Cooperation, http://www.benning.army.mil/tenant/whinsec/overview.html.

168 Jesus Valdez, "IAAFA-Building Partner Nation Capacity for More than 67 Years," Dialogo, http://dialogo-americas.com/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/special_reports/2010/11/12/feature-01.

169 Jose A. Sanchez and S. David Spoon, "The Evolution of the Inter-American Air Forces Academy," *Air & Space Power Journal* (2005), http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/apjinternational/apj-s/2005/3tri05/sanchezeng.html.

USNORTHCOM should focus in enhancing and supporting these institutions who can lead the way in BPC through their PME Spanish programs. These institutions are the "ground zero" for future development of military diplomacy and cooperation between the United States and Mexico. Building up the capacity and support for these critical BPC platforms will pave the way to establish an indirect approach for future bilateral military cooperation.

c. Policy Recommendation 3: Institution-building Through an Indirect Approach

The Mexican constitution is one of the biggest hurdles that the Mexican Armed Forces face when confronting any development to enhance a military-to-military relationship with the United States. According to Jeffrey Burkett, this "relationship has been hindered by the traditional Mexican policy of non-intervention an [Mexican] opposition to any form of joint [and combined] hemispheric defense force or other multilateral institution."[170] Therefore, DOD can influence institution-building through an indirect approach that involves advocating the increase of the bilateral exchange program, widening the gates for Mexican military cadets to U.S. military academies, and supporting specialized U.S. Mexico relations programs/projects for a selected foreign area officer core.

The exchange programs are an advance activity that is limited by the Mexican constitution; however, USNORTHCOM, service components and the SCO should encourage from both sides. Opening a lifeline of exchange officers would give both sides a better understanding of the organizational culture of these institutions, which will render higher chances to develop stronger defense relations. These particular BPC advance activity has historically assist two military institutions to build trust among other nations. After WWII, the French and the Germans initiated bilateral exchange programs, which helped the defense relations between both countries. Additionally, DOD must advocate and promote greater opportunities for Mexican Armed Forces to attend U.S.

[170] Jeffrey W. Burkett, "Opening the Mexican Door: Continental Defense Cooperation," (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School), 18–19.

military academies. The formation stage of future military leaders is the right stage to solidify institutional interdependency relations.[171]

Finally, a greater investment to produce a qualified cadre of Mexican military experts who understand the Mexican military, political, and economic environment and will assist in future development of defense strategies and policies for bilateral cooperation is imperative. These experts will become a greater asset not only at the COCOM level, but also at service components and the SCO. The U.S. Marine Corps has taken a right step in this effort. They are currently sponsoring the U.S.-Mexico Security-Development Partnership Project as a new initiative to establish a better understanding of U.S.-Mexico relations. This project seeks to link research and teaching to operational concerns with a degree of focus on the defense relations. Students from all the different services, including Mexican military officer participate in this extraordinary program. USNORTHCOM should make every effort to advocate, or possibly, sponsor this exceptional program. The development of this cadre will create trust pillars for the future of U.S.-Mexico defense relations.

B. CONCLUSION

For more than a century, U.S.-Mexico defense relations have changed and evolved. This thesis identified main factors that caused the relatively low level of trust characterized in U.S.-Mexican defense relations. The lack of understanding of the organizational culture, the historic events that continue to mold the perceptions within the Mexican institutions, and the wrong policies and strategies used within the BPC realm have hindered the advancement of a relation based on trust. Nevertheless, both institutions, particularly the Mexican Armed Forces, have faced challenges that have also limited their ability to strengthen and build upon a trusting military-to-military partnership. As Rodriguez and Wilson noted, "Trust has been identified a condition for cooperation and prerequisite for successful strategic alliances."[172] The research

[171] Paul et al., *What Works Best when Building Partner Capacity*, 23.

[172] Rodriguez and Wilson, *Relationship Bonding and Trust as Foundation for Commitment*, 8.

identifies—through a historical, cultural, and political analysis—that indeed, "trust" is what is missing.

Consequently, prior U.S.-military engagements with the Mexican military have been ineffective in shaping a relationship based on trust. The 9/11 event and the current militarization of Mexico in response to security threat caused by TCOs have limited the focus for a better bilateral defense relation. This research study highlights the historical and cultural paradigms that have challenged the relationship between the U.S. and Mexican militaries while highlighting the different venues that could be used to work around those challenges. To better operate in a joint environment the U.S. military must be fully acquainted with the evolution, the culture and challenges of the Mexican Armed Forces.

Despite the historical emphasis, cultural barriers, and the challenges faced by the Mexican Armed Forces, the conditions in which this institution has evolved is placed directly between the civil-military relations established throughout its creation. An historical background of the Mexican Armed Forces, to include its profound civil-military relation, and the evolution and transformation of the force revealed that the Mexican military was caught between a revolutionary mentality and civilian dominance. This study also presents the Mexican historical evolution as a "perverse cycle" of Militarization–Revolution–Demilitarization–Democratization–Remilitarization. The division of the Mexican Armed Forces (SEDENA and SEMAR) left a structural and operational whole of accountability amongst these martial institutions.

Additionally, this study also elaborated cultural differences, in particular, the professionalization efforts compared to the U.S. Armed Forces, and an extreme vertical culture that continues to challenge the development of an institution that thrives for recognition. This study identifies the challenges that the Mexican military faces in the beginning of this century. Professionalization, defense structure, joint collaboration, and budget are critical areas that continue to test this respected institution. This thesis highlights that the challenges faced by the Mexican military—mixed with the cultural differences—must be fully understood in order to provide concrete policies and strategies that will favor both institutions.

This thesis also provides an analysis of historical military relations between the U.S. and Mexico, and presents events that that where critical in understanding why "distrust" has haunted both sides for a very long time. Historical events present a roadblock, which continues to prevent the growth of a trusting relationship between these two entities. Despite U.S. efforts to build the capacities of the Mexican Armed Forces, distrust continues to be the most relevant factor affecting this relationship. The Security Assistance Program has become a key component in supporting U.S. foreign policies. A complex BPC process that delegates different authorities and responsibilities to different actors in an effort to exercise security cooperation becomes relevant as strategies and policies are developed; however, the strategies and policies built since 2002 have not been the most preferable to build "trust" with the Mexican counterparts. The thesis also shows evidence that U.S. security assistance programs are not entirely developed to build security cooperation mechanisms that establish the pillars for a relationship based on trust. An emphasis of using IMET for specialized training, limits the U.S. ability to truly influence and express U.S. commitments to the Mexican Armed Forces. The limited interaction of these two institutions, whether because of political or historical factors, has identified the need for policies to mold trust building in current military generations.

Finally, through an analysis and the use of an integrative trust-building model, several policy recommendations were offered to ensure better cooperation between both militaries to meet the security challenges confronting North America and to enhance trust building mechanisms that will solidify defense relations well into the twenty-first century and beyond. These policy recommendations included a sound strategy for building partnership trust from USNORTHCOM, the use and expansion of the BPC PME platforms (i.e., IADC, WHINSEC, and IAAFA), and a solid policy of institution-building through an indirect approach. As both countries continue to face mutual economic and security challenges, interdependency, at all institutional levels, becomes primordial. Current U.S.-Mexico relations are much better than it used to be. The U.S. Armed Forces should take advantage to implement new trust-building mechanisms that will not only help bridge the security cooperation gap, but also build a framework based on trust and total commitment.

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APPENDIX A. SEDENA ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Following is the organizational chart of the Mexican Secretary of National Defense (SEDENA).[173]

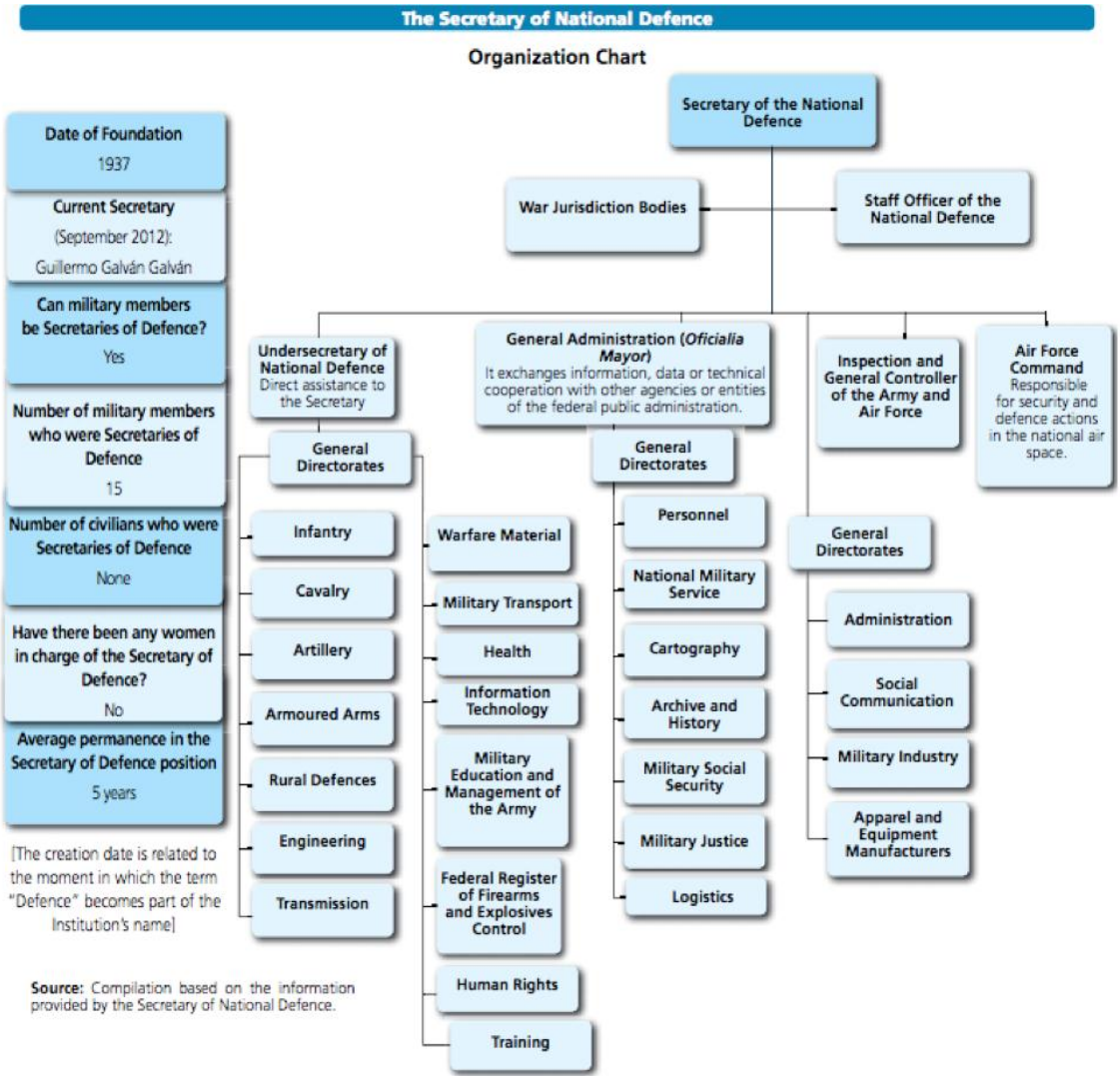

Figure 17. SEDENA Organizational Structure Chart

173 "A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and the Caribbean: Mexico."

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APPENDIX B. SEMAR ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Following is the organizational chart of the Mexican Secretary of the Navy (SEDENA)[174]

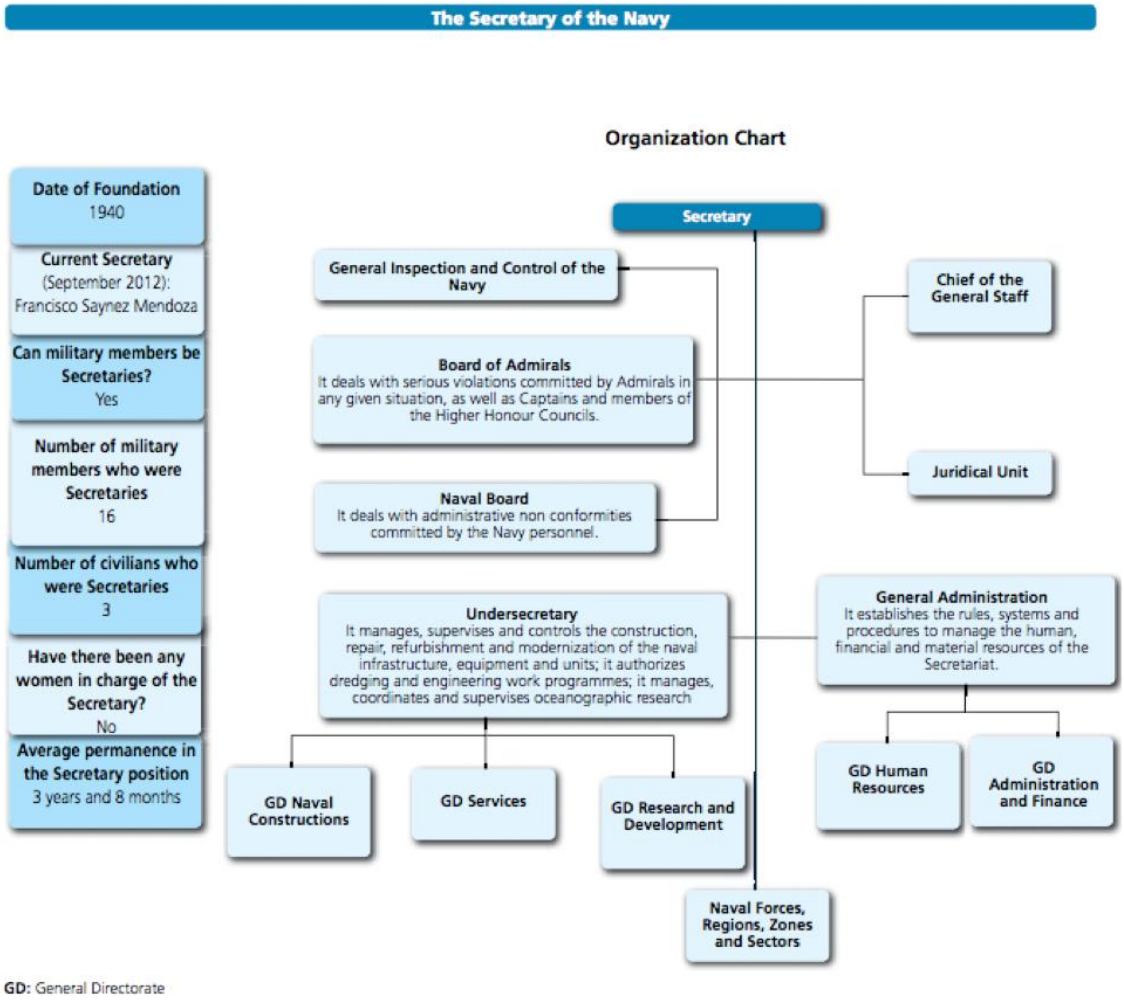

Figure 18. SEMAR Organizational Structure Chart

[174] Ibid.

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